

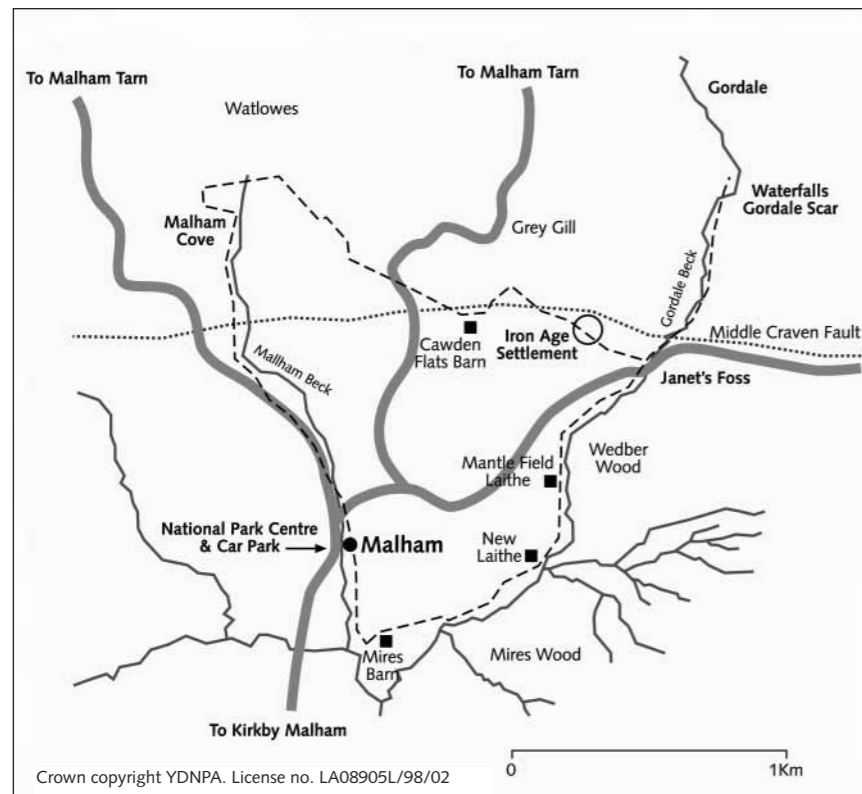
THE FUTURE

The National Park Management Plan (NPMP) has now been produced and identifies objectives for management of the whole of the National Park. The Area Actions consultation process has developed actions based on the NPMP, but specific to the Malham area. Some of these are NPA actions, while others are for a range of statutory and voluntary bodies to action.

New partnerships and new funding sources are continually emerging. The Yorkshire Dales Millennium Trust spent some of the Dales Environet Project funds (totalling around £8m), on projects in the Malham area up to the year 2000. The Trust is continuing to invest new funding on projects in the area, along with the Environment Agency and a large number of environmental organisations.

Meanwhile the special environmental qualities of the area and traditional character of the village remain under serious threat from its popularity, but without visitors, it's difficult to imagine how the village economy could survive. Within the local and wider community there are many diverse and competing views on this issue.

For the YDNPA, 'success,' depends on the careful management of visitors, to enable conservation of the special qualities of the area, while seeking to foster the social and economic needs of the local community. Tremendous efforts have been made in pursuing these aims and while there have been many successes, there is no room for complacency. For Malham, the vision for the future continues to evolve, but remains firmly 'in the balance'.



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Education File

Information for students and
group leaders



YORKSHIRE DALES
National Park Authority

Malham

a honeypot site

THE DEVELOPMENT OF MALHAM

The origins of the village of Malham can be traced back to the Anglian settlement of the Dales during the 7th and 8th centuries. The village as seen today was established in the 17th century. Since that time a few buildings have been added, mainly filling spaces without really increasing the built-up area. Lead and zinc mining and the wool trade have all been important in village development. The influence of sheep and cattle rearing continues to be strong. Tourism is the most significant economic activity today.

A NATIONAL ASSET

Few places in Britain possess such spectacular examples of upland limestone landforms on a scale as dramatic as the area around Malham. Combined with the wealth and diversity of wildlife, habitats and cultural features close by, this makes Malham a very special area. In recognition of the presence of precious natural assets, a large part of the area has been designated under European legislation, as a Special Area of Conservation (SAC), this includes the Malham - Arncliffe Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), a site recognised by Natural England as nationally important. Added to this, Malham Tarn and its associated wetland is a National Nature Reserve, which is designated under the Ramsar Convention as a wetland of international importance.

These types of recognition add to the protection that Malham and its surroundings enjoy as part of the Yorkshire Dales National Park, designated to conserve and enhance the special qualities of wildlife, natural beauty and cultural heritage of the area.

MALHAM IN THE BALANCE

Yet the features that make Malham so special are under severe pressure, from changing land management practices, changing economic and social structures and in particular from the ever growing number of visitors.

Malham has been a focus for recreational activity during the last 200 years, and is very popular with many types of visitor from fell walkers to leisure shoppers. This places the special qualities of the area and traditional character of the village under serious strain.

But along with visitors comes money. In 1991, visitors to the national park as a whole spent an estimated £46 million, creating an estimated 1000 full-time jobs. By 1994 estimated spending had risen to £89 million (spending in Craven and Richmondshire is estimated at £350 million in 2004). This is money which has kept many local shops and services afloat financially. Even though attention is increasingly focused on the needs of visitors, this has helped the economy of the village at a time when local services, small businesses particularly, have faced huge difficulties.

Achieving a balance between conservation, recreation and the needs of the local community has been a serious concern for some time.



Visitors to Malham Cove (YDNPA)

SERVICES FOR THE VISITOR

Accommodation: no. of bed spaces 244
(includes: hotels; guest houses; youth hostel; bunk barns; etc)

Cafes / restaurants (including those in hotels)	3
Shops (Post Office open Tuesday and Saturday, souvenir, sweets; etc)	4
Public houses	2
Camp sites	2

VISITORS TO MALHAM NATIONAL PARK CENTRE

Figures are from April to March inclusive

NB Many visitors do not go into the NPC

1991/92	139,466
1992/93	148,424
1993/94	149,940
1994/95	142,440
1995/96	142,570
1996/97	147,734
1997/98	141,222
1998/99	130,834
1999/2000	106,231
2000/01	90,150
2001/02	52,594
2002/03	109,257
2003/04	113,764
2004/05	116,063
2005/06	111,260

POPULATION FIGURES

1801	262
1851	188
1881	148
1891	163
1931	126
1951	171
1971	163
1981	112
1991	134
2001	156

Source: official census data



Visitors to Malham (YDNPA)

ISSUES FOR MALHAM

In 1991 an estimated 6.1 million visitor days were spent in the YDNP as a whole. In 1994 (All Parks Visitor Survey) this number had increased to 8.3 million. It is estimated that around three quarters of a million visitor days are spent in Malham per year (556,000 thousand in 1991).

In 1994 (APVS) an estimated 90% of all visitors travelled to the YDNP by car or van.

On Summer and Bank Holiday weekends the levels of traffic and car parking substantially reduce the appeal of the village. They interfere with many of the necessary activities of local people and can affect access for emergency vehicles.

At peak times the demand for car parking spaces can far exceed capacity. At present, formal off-street parking is provided for 96 cars, including 4 spaces for disabled drivers and 11 coaches, on the NPA car park. 50% more parking is available by using the grass areas in dry weather.

Vehicles parking on road sides and in passing places add to the congestion and create extra hazards for all users.

Heavy use of footpaths creates erosion, which widens paths as users try to avoid the muddy areas. This excessive erosion and the accompanying loss of grazing have been problems on many of the popular paths around Malham.

Damage caused by visitors is difficult to estimate, much is unintentional and it's hard to attribute it to tourism directly. There will always be an element of deliberate vandalism, but this is minimal and could happen anywhere.

Litter is a constant problem, reducing the appeal of the area, and increasing the risk of harm to livestock and wildlife. It is costly and time consuming to remove.

Problems for farmers and land owners include: increasing trespass; drystone wall damage by people climbing them; stock disturbance; vandalism; most recently, lack of understanding of the user's rights and responsibilities on open access land.

Hay meadows and their rich diversity of species have been lost: grassland has been improved using fertilisers and more productive non-native grasses, boosting silage yields at the expense of value to wildlife.

Traditional features of the farming landscape, field barns and dry stone walls in particular, have become neglected and in some cases derelict.

Wildlife disturbance has grown. There is little natural tree regeneration due to woodlands being open to stock, the increase in average age of trees in the area will eventually lead to the loss of woodland.

Limestone pavement has been degraded by the general wear and tear from visitors' feet and in places by livestock and the removal of stone.

General encroachment on the lifestyle of local people is becoming commonplace, through increasing noise, disturbance and loss of privacy.

The popularity of the village and competition for housing has led to an increase in house and property prices.

Increasing house prices have made it more difficult for low income earners, often local people and especially the young, to buy property in the area and effectively forced them to leave. In many Dales villages, growing numbers of holiday homes have reduced the availability of property to buy or rent and added to the difficulties of local people. The number of holiday properties in Malham is very low.

More people need more facilities. The pressure for tourism related developments, such as cafes, pubs, shops and public toilets is growing.



Traffic in Malham (YDNPA)

MANAGING FOR IMPROVEMENT

In 1974 the **National Park Centre** was opened, intended as the starting point for visitors to find out more about the area. The Centre has displays on how the landscape was formed, why it is so special and why it deserves special care. Laying Ritter paving has created a durable grass surface on parts of the car park. Tree planting has reduced the visual intrusion of the tarmac from vantage points, such as the top of Malham Cove.

The NPA removed all **litter bins** from NPA property in Malham during 1984, closely followed by a Parish Council decision to remove litter bins from the village. This policy has reduced litter problems hugely, encouraging individuals to take personal responsibility for disposal of their own litter by getting rid of it at home. More active promotion of the NPA litter policy is now in place, but litter picks continue to be organised on demand, in the most heavily used places in the area.

A growing problem is that of **dog waste** in the area, particularly along public footpaths. In April 2004 a dog waste bin was trialled in the NPA car park in Malham. The bin was used as litter bin and was constantly overflowing: it was removed in May 2005.



Litter problem: caused by a 'waste bin'? (YDNPA)

The **Malham Steering Group** (a partnership of Parish, District and County Councillors, County Highways Department, National Park Authority and National Trust) was set up in 1977 to investigate ways in which the problems facing Malham could be resolved. The group became highly productive initiating schemes including:

- building steps at the side of Malham Cove;
- surfacing several heavily used paths;
- placing of parking restrictions;
- enhancements to the village green;
- voluntary restraint on commercial signing.

A similar group, **'The Malhamdale Initiative'** is now working on a plan to influence the future of Malham.

Footpath surfacing, using crushed limestone to combat excessive erosion, began with the path to the Cove in 1981. Most paths around Malham have now had similar engineering works. The path running past Mires Barn to Janet's Foss is surfaced for its entire length, as is the path from Gordale Bridge to Gordale Scar.

In 1992 an **experimental traffic scheme** investigated the control of on-street parking and providing extra off-street parking. The views of visitors and all households in Malham were sought via a questionnaire. Analysis of responses revealed that visitors generally supported the experiment, while residents were divided in their opinion. Traders in the village were particularly concerned that business would be adversely effected, some reported a loss in income during the days of the experiment. Because of the lack of consensus it was decided not to proceed with the scheme. Experience gained has been applied in many ways and the outcomes may be re-visited in the future.

Public parking in the village is continually monitored. There are no plans to extend parking facilities in the village. Although heavily used in Summer the existing car park is often empty on Winter weekdays. During the busy summer season, a local landowner provides overspill car parking space on Sundays and bank holidays.

In 1994 the Malham Lings Open Access Area was established through local farmers in the Countryside Stewardship Scheme (Defra). This has been succeeded across large areas of Malham Moor by **Open Access** under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act (2000).

Throughout the area there have been significant **improvements in access:**

- improved way marking has reduced trespass;
- many ladder stiles have been replaced by kissing gates;
- hard surfacing has limited damage caused by visitor numbers

Many of these improvements create opportunities for people with **differing physical capabilities**, an integral aspect of the NPAs approach to developing the public rights of way network.

The **drystone walls** around the Cove are important historic and landscape features. Many walls have been replaced as part of a maintenance programme organised by 'Dales Volunteers', Rebuilt walls can be seen beside the beck at the clapper bridge and the woodland near the Cove steps.

The **Limestone Country Project** provides grants to farmers to support a return to mixed farming, using hardy upland cattle breeds, to improve land management and conservation. The project seeks to restore and conserve 'limestone country', internationally recognised for its outstanding geology, unique habitats and exceptional plant and wildlife. Several local farmers are involved.

Much of the area is a **Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)**. Several local farmers and land owners have committed to environmental improvement by entering land into Environmental Stewardship (Natural England). Areas of unstable scree and limestone pavement for example, have been fenced off, protecting them against grazing and trampling and encouraging the growth of stabilising vegetation and limestone flora. Limestone Pavement Orders protect all limestone pavements. These are monitored regularly by NPA staff.

The NPA works closely with the **British Mountaineering Council**, whose members climb Gordale Scar and Malham Cove. This work helps to ensure that the fragile environment is not damaged by careless climbing and mis-use of equipment (securing bolts, etc). Voluntary climbing restrictions imposed by climbers during the nesting season, assist breeding birds, peregrines in particular.

Woodland projects under management agreements between land managers and the YDNPA, are ensuring the regeneration and conservation of local woods. Tree planting is contributing to river bank restoration on the River Aire.

Children from Kirkby in Malhamdale Primary School have **adopted the woodland** at the base of the Cove to plant trees each November, grown in a nursery area at school from local seed.

The **Skipton to Malham Postbus** was introduced in 1993, a partnership between the Royal Mail, North Yorkshire County Council and the Rural Development Commission: drivers combine the delivery and collection of mail, with passenger stops en route. More recently, a **summer Sunday service** from Leeds and Bradford and an all year round Saturday service from Preston were introduced. The **National Trust**, supported financially by the YDNPA Sustainable Development Fund, provides a new bus service between Malham and Settle, via Malham Tarn. Even though current activity is proving a success, the future of public transport services in rural areas such as Malham is always subject to changes in priorities and funding.