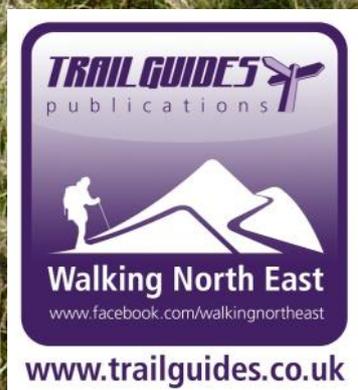


Walking North East

FEBRUARY 2014



Cover photo.

A reminder of what summer sunshine can look like. Climbing up the side of Cleasby Hill in Arkengarthdale.

This walk will feature in a new book, 'Walking in Arkengarthdale' which will be available later this year.



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Well February seemed to pass fairly quickly, maybe a little too quickly for some of us.

Due to factors outside my control, I didn't manage to get out for one walk during the month. Not quite sure what the world is coming to

On the plus side that gave a little bit more time to pull together our last book which is now available and receiving a great deal of interest.

Going by the title 'Walking in Teesdale' the book covers nine walks throughout the length of the dale. However, one thing that you do learn by walking in our northern dales, there is always something more to explore. So at some point expect a 'Walking in Teesdale 2', the area is just too attractive not to walk in.

Details of the book and how to get your copy are further in the newsletter.

With 'Teesdale' now complete we are concentrating on our second book on the North York Moors. 'Walking around Helmsley and Ryedale' is going through it's final phases before completion. After that, well I quite fancy a few walks up the Allendales, these little valleys at the top of the North Pennines are not your quintessential Northumberland countryside and in many ways deserve to be explored more fully.

Walking News :

Cleveland Mountain Rescue Team have been testing their skills with the rescue of an owl from a pond. But no ordinary owl, rather a quarter ton wooden sculpture that was spotted floating in a small pond after it had gone missing at the Flatts Lane Country Park near Middlesbrough. The retrieval of the owl was turned into a team building exercise with members using specialist equipment to haul the oak sculpture from the edge of the pond and then load it onto a stretcher before taking it back to its original location.

The giant Steller's Sea Eagle, Nikita, that had gone missing from the foot of Pen-y-Ghent in the Yorkshire Dales has been found safe and well in Poulton-le-Fylde, near Blackpool. Blown off course by strong winds, the bird had spent five days on her own before being recovered on January 31st.

The organisers of the Haltwhistle Walking Festival have unveiled a varied walks programme for their Spring 2014 festival. The first weekend sees a test of stamina for those walkers interested in the longer events with an opportunity to tackle Cold Fell on the Saturday followed by Cross Fell on Sunday. At the same time, the festival's shorter event is a two-day linear walk titled "Calling All Stations" heading from Alston to Haltwhistle and taking in all the railway stations on The Branch line, as it is known to locals. On the second weekend, participants will complete the whole of the Isaac's Tea Trail over three days. There are a number of other walks during the length of the festival including special interest walks including a history walk around Whitley Chapel, a sustainable energy walk, the very popular bird walks and a singing walk. Full details of the festival programme and details of how to book are on www.haltwhistlewalkingfestival.org or pick up a leaflet from many local venues and shops.

Volunteers from Teesdale and Weardale Search and Mountain Rescue Team were called out on Sunday to search for a middle-aged man in the Tow Law area of County Durham. The man, who had been reported missing, had not been seen since Friday evening and police were concerned for his welfare. The team concentrated their search on wooded areas to the south west of Tow Law, where, because of the nature of the terrain, the area was initially covered with one of the team's search dogs with his handler, followed up by other team members. After about an hour of searching, the dog indicated to the handler and took her into a steep-sided gorge where she located the missing man. Experts from the team who are trained in crag rescues were then called to assist the recovery of the casualty who was suffering from severe hypothermia before he was rushed to hospital by the Great North Air Ambulance.

A draft vision of how Northumberland National Park's 405 square miles will look and feel in twenty years time is being prepared and focuses on the area's distinctive open moorland habitats, woodlands, wildlife and enclosed in-by-land. One of the central aims is to interconnect habitats to give year-round food sources for wildlife and to also provide the wealth of native species with room to expand their populations or find refuge in the event of environmental change. The plan is that by 2035 a number of species such as curlew and red squirrels will be widespread across the national park while otters and migratory fish will be found in all river catchments and freshwater pearl mussel and white-clawed crayfish will be present in their current locations but with expanded populations.

The remains of the Bolt's Law Incline Engine House above the Rookhope valley, a side-valley of Weardale. At one point this was the highest rail line in the country with the steam engine in the house hauling laden wagons up the steep slope from Rookhope. This walk will feature in a forthcoming book 'Walking in Weardale 2' which will be released later this year.



Other more common species such as brown hares, bats, red grouse, roe deer, snipe, lapwing, dippers, wild goats, bumblebees, butterflies and beetles, wood cranesbill, bog asphodel and orchids are also to be encouraged. The possibility of reintroducing species that have been missing from the national park for a long time such as pine martens, various butterfly species and plants will be explored and this may even include the bringing back of beaver as has happened in other parts of the country.

Officers at Northumberland County Council planning department have come under fire from an anti-wind campaigner who claims they are recommending the approval of 97% of planning applications for small turbines sited on farms, usually despite strong local opposition. Don Brownlow, a parish councillor at Duddo who runs the anti-wind website Windbyte, has presented data that shows that county planning officers have recommended approval of 97% of farm turbines over 30 metres in height between the authority being formed and the end of September. During this time period, the planning officials have only recommended refusal of two single turbines over 30 metres, these being due to their impact on listed buildings or scheduled ancient monuments. The research suggests that councillors in Northumberland have voted against their officer's advice in 33% of cases involving turbines that are over 30 metres, usually refusing where they have been urged to approve. This compares to 3% in County Durham and 4% in the Scottish Borders. Councillor Brownlow said of his figures: "It is time that members of Northumberland County Council asked some questions about what is going on in their planning department."

The Forestry Commission have announced plans to make Hamsterley Forest in County Durham into a top tourist destination. These include a 25 metre footbridge across the Bedburn Beck and the longest zipwire in the country. Funding is already in place to improve its visitor centre by Easter, which will introduce a new play area and courtyard, extending the tearoom and demolishing the old shop. Improvements to existing buildings will be done in conjunction with Durham County Council which contributed £10,000 towards glazing, branding and cladding of the buildings. The commission itself has put £40,000 towards the improvements and a further £20,000 is to be spent on upgrading the toilet facilities. Leading on from the visitor centre, the commission plans to build a play trail featuring stilts, balancing logs, slides and a host of other child-related activities. This is being built in stages as its estimated £300,000 cost is not yet funded. The commission has already spent £50,000 on upgrading the car park and a further £50,000 on dropping a power cable that crossed over the site. The removal of the powerline, along with the construction of a footbridge across Bedburn Beck which will cost £95,000, would pave the way for adventure company Go Ape to create a forest adventure park that could include Britain's longest zipwire.

Takes some believing but

The air freshener manufacturer Air Wick, has announced a tie-up with the country's 15 national parks and is producing four fragrances which are claimed to capture the freshness of country landscapes. The new fragrances have been blended to evoke the spirit of our national parks, with the spring-summer collection placing the spotlight on the Yorkshire Dales, Brecon Beacons, Exmoor and Peak District. Air Wick has previously released fragrances based on the USA's national parks. According to UK National Parks, the umbrella body for the country's 15 parks, the tie-up with Air Wick will help generate funds for heritage projects within the parks. The four room fragrances are on sale in UK shops as from this month.

So if you fancy your front room smelling like the Yorkshire Dales

Improvements have been made to the path towards the end of Wainwright's Coast to Coast Walk. Volunteers from the North York Moors National Park have built a 65 metre long boardwalk through woods south of Littlebeck, avoiding a ford near Falling Foss waterfall. The ford can be slippery and in wet weather often floods and then becoming impassable. The national park authority has now created a second path that runs alongside May beck and provides an alternative to the ford crossing by making use of an old stone arch bridge to cross the beck before joining the existing Coast to Coast route higher up. The path has had the boardwalk installed to provide an easier passage not only for Coast to Coast walkers, but also for families who visit the area to see the Falling Foss waterfall. The boardwalk meanders through the woodland above the beck and has two raised viewing areas offering views of May Beck and its stone arch bridge.

A number of footpaths in Teesdale are due to get a revamp. The Heart of Teesdale Landscape Partnership is seeking to improve the Teesdale Way by removing stiles and replacing them with gates to make it easier for people walking along it. Currently sections are being reviewed running up from Barnard Castle to Cotherstone and then from Barnard Castle down to Whorlton Lido with the Partnership looking to make the improvements to the popular walking route as it travels between Eggleston and Piercebridge.

It is now ten years since the first young red kite was released in the Derwent Valley near Gateshead in an ambitious scheme to re-introduce this large bird of prey to the North East. The first bird, named Speedy, was swiftly followed by bird number 2 which was called Scarlet. Both birds later flew south and settled in North Yorkshire to breed. Over the course of three years, 94 young birds were released in the Derwent Valley and the birds have definitely left their mark in the area. Go North East now have a red kite branded bus service, a red kite pub, red kite entrance signs to Rowlands Gill in the valley, while 14 schools have adopted and named their own birds. It is thought that the red kite population in the region is currently around 85 individuals with some birds having flown off and settled in other parts of the country and five are known to have fallen victim to persecution. Now an intensive survey of breeding red kites in the North East has been started which will run to the end of June.

On a personal level, I've been sat on the hills above Weardale watching a pair of these majestic birds soar high in the skies above me and I've been in lower Teesdale, around Piercebridge, watching a solitary bird circle above the fields. In both cases I've been mesmerised by the sheer size and effortless beauty of these wonderful birds. Definitely something worth making the effort to see.

Speaking of which, has anybody out there walked the Red Kite Trail in the Derwent Valley ? Think that I might just have a trip up there later in the year.

An agreement has been reached between the air traffic services company NATS and two windfarm developers, Vattenfall and SSE. In the past there has always been fears that turbines may show up as clutter on radar screens and then been mistaken for aircraft, a concern that has in some cases seen windfarm bids fail. Vattenfall's planning application to site a number of 125 metre high turbines on the Ray Estate near Kirkwhelpington had faced objections from both NATS and Newcastle International Airport over the impact that they would have on the Great Dun Fell radar. The agreement will now see work carried out to two air traffic control radars, at Great Dun Fell in the North Pennines which covers the North East, and Lowther Hill in the Southern Uplands of Scotland, work which will rectify this situation. The deal follows the deployment of three windfarm friendly air defence radars around the UK, to address Ministry of Defence objections and allow turbine schemes to proceed. It is

now expected that the Ray scheme will now commence and anti-windfarm campaigners have voiced their fears that the work to the Great Dun Fell radar will now pave the way for other projects. Plans for up to 100 turbines at Kielder Forest could have been expected to face objections based on their impact on the radar network but that these objections are now not likely to arise. RenewableUK, which represents the wind industry, has hailed the deal as a major advance for the sector, claiming that the work to the two radars could be replicated at other sites across the UK while campaigners believe that other developers will have been monitoring the radar situation knowing that it was a significant barrier to any turbine scheme, and that they would now seek to proceed with many more similar schemes.

The Liberal Democrat MP for Westmorland and Lonsdale, Tim Farron, is pressing the Government to extend a scheme in which mountain rescue teams receive a grant for equipment and training. The coalition Government agreed to an annual funding of £200,000 for UK teams, but this scheme is due to end in 2015. Mr Farron, who is the vice-chair of the all party parliamentary group on mountain rescue teams, said Transport Secretary Patrick McLoughlin told him in a letter: "In 2011, the Treasury approved grants to be awarded to these organisations to cover the cost of purchase of equipment and training for their staff. Funding of £200,000 per annum for a four year period commenced in April 2011, and will finish at the end of March 2015. The Treasury is considering whether to providing further grants in 2015-16 and I expect that decision will be announced shortly." Mr Farron said: "This letter is welcome news but we need the Treasury to agree to keep the funding that we fought so hard for in place."

Two walkers were rescued from Cairn Hill in the Cheviots on Tuesday, in a night-time rescue involving volunteer teams from each side of the border. The two walkers, in their 60s, had set off from the Ingram Valley in Northumberland for a high-level walk in the Cheviots but became lost in thick cloud near The Cheviot. In dense clag and very limited visibility, they became disorientated and used a fence as a navigational handrail. Unfortunately it was a relatively new fence which wasn't marked on their map, and this just added to their problems. Several hours after dark they managed to pinpoint their position at a finger-post on Cairn Hill, just a few hundred metres west of Cheviot summit. The older walker's long-standing medical condition, combined with the pair's exhaustion, persuaded them to put in a 999 call to mountain rescue about 9 pm. Rescue teams were deployed from Northumberland and also from the Scottish side of the border but initially the poor visibility ruled out any use of a helicopter. However, shortly before midnight, the clag thinned enough for a Sea King from RAF Boulmer to ferry a party from the Northumberland team and a SARDA dog up to Cairn Hill. The walkers were located about 500 metres from the summit and evacuated by helicopter.

Peg Powler's Suds - you walk in Teesdale and don't know about them or even about Peg herself ??

You know all about the lead mine's in Teesdale but did you know that it was also part of the Durham Coalfield ??

Have you ever come across the remains of a Second World War armoured vehicle on the hillside, dating back to when Teesdale was used as a training ground for tank crews ??

What about the prehistoric remains that lie scattered throughout the dale, reminders of when this land was wild forest and still being settled by our ancient forebears.

And need I mention Dirt Pit ??

Teesdale, one of the most beautiful valleys in the North of England and one that deserves the footstep of the discerning walker. Our latest publication, now released, and entitled '**Walking in Teesdale**' follows local writer Kev Shevels as he takes nine walks through the length of this dale. With it's high moorland hills, picturesque field patterns and wild, wooded side-valleys, this countryside just beckons the inquisitive explorer to tread it's paths and trails. With his latest book Kev invites you to walk with him as he explores the countryside, history and culture of this, one of his favourite valleys.

This full colour, 116 page, A5 book is now available from our website for £9.99 and is also available as a PDR download for £4.99. Follow the link below to go direct to the site.

<http://www.trailguides.co.uk>



PUBLICATION LIST 01.03.2014

Below is a full list of all of our current Walking North East publications.

Durham

Ancient Stones.
Hamsterley Forest.
The Barningham Trail.
Mid-Teesdale Walks.
Walks from Stanhope.
Walking in Weardale.
[Walking in Teesdale.](#)

Now released.

Northumberland

The Cheviot Hills.
The Hills of Upper Coquetdale.
Walks from Kirknewton.
Walks Around Rothbury & Coquetdale.
Walks from Wooler.
Walks on the Wild Side: The Cheviot Hills.
Walks in Hadrian's Wall Country.

North Yorkshire

Walks from Gunnerside.
Walks around Reeth and Upper Swaledale.
Walking the Hills of Upper Swaledale.
Walking around Osmotherley and the Cleveland Hills.

Long Distance Walks

The North West Way. **New publication.**

New publications on the way

[Walking in Arkengarthdale.](#)
[Walking around Darlington and the Tees Valley.](#)
[Walking around Helmsley and Ryedale.](#)
[Walking in Weardale 2.](#)

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