

Walking North East

JANUARY 2013



TRAIL GUIDES 
publications



Walking North East
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The sharp eyed amongst you will have realised that we now have a new logo ordaining the front cover of this newsletter. The aim of the change was to emphasise our aim of bringing you the best of the walking within the North Eastern counties of Cleveland, Durham, Northumberland and North Yorkshire. This is a region that contains three National Parks, Northumberland, North York Moors and the Yorkshire Dales and four Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty including the country's largest, the North Pennines, plus the Howardian Hills, Nidderdale and the Northumberland Coast. Quite simply some of the country's best and most varied walking.

The new logo appears now on our newsletter and also on our new Facebook page, further details on this appear later in the newsletter. All our forthcoming new publications will carry the logo on the front cover and our existing books will, as they come up for new print runs, have their cover changed to incorporate the revised logo. So whether you are in a book shop, an outdoor shop or a tourist information centre, if you are buying a walker's guide then keep your eyes open for the Walking North East square. It's a sign that you are getting a pretty good book.

The first of our publications to carry the 'WNE' square is the revised second edition of 'Walking the Hills of Upper Swaledale' which is available as from the 31st January. For more details see below and also see our monthly special offers on the back page.



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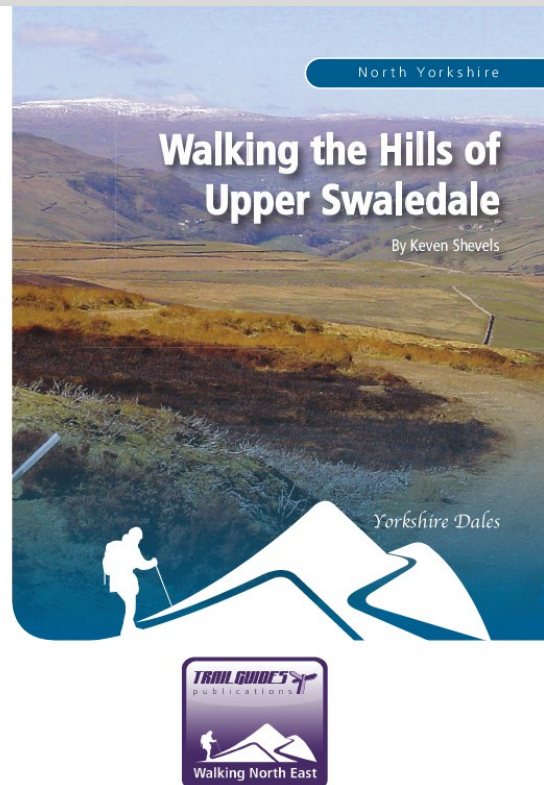
NEW PUBLICATION

When you think of Swaledale the image of probably the most scenic and popular of the Yorkshire Dales comes to mind. But for the dedicated hill walker the hills on both sides of this narrow valley can provide some of the wildest and most solitary walking in the north eastern counties. A couple of years ago we published the first of our Swaledale walking guides, this one being aimed at the hillwalker who preferred the longer, rougher walks than are normally provided for in guidebooks. Now republished in a new full colour second edition, this book will be available as from the 31st January.

Taking as it's inspiration the hills of the dale that rise above the magic two thousand foot mark, in the course of eight walks this book travels over the summits of each of them plus a number of other lower but just as fascinating hills. If you like well-maintained low level paths then this guidebook is not for you as all the walks included contain large elements of heather, peat bog and open moor walking. But one thing is guaranteed, you do see the wilder side of this iconic dale.

Retitled as 'Walking the Hills of Upper Swaledale' the new book will be available, both as a book and a PDF download, as from the 31st January from our website at www.trailguides.co.uk or ask at your local bookshop.

SEE OUR SPECIAL OFFERS SECTION AT THE BACK OF THIS NEWSLETTER.



Walking News :

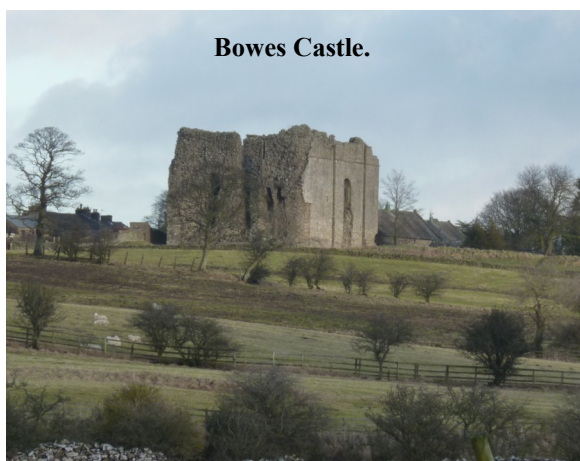
The Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority is to invest £50,000 to give the Dales Countryside Museum in Hawes a facelift in order to boost visitor numbers and increase income to help off-set the building's running costs. The investment will be used to alter the entrance and lay-out of the YDNPA-owned museum in order to make it more obvious what is on offer and to encourage more visitors to pay to look around the fabulous collection and exhibits – which have also recently been enhanced by the addition of a new sculpture trail. Research during the summer showed that, while only 11 per cent of those currently visiting the building actually paid to go round the museum, an impressive 96 per cent of those who did pay were satisfied with their experience. As well as the collection and exhibits, the Museum offers a range of events including the current celebration of local food and produce, education resources and activities aimed at generating community participation in, and developing understanding of the cultural heritage of the Dales. The site also includes a National Park Centre and a research room where individuals can investigate the archive and artifacts collection. The work should be finished in the spring of 2014 and some new exhibitions, based around the current themes, will hopefully be introduced.

For anybody who has not visited the museum, I can personally recommend it. It does provide a fascinating insight into the Dales life of past years.

Worrying news that the Department of Energy and Climate Change (DECC) is considering the potential of the North Pennines as a source of shale gas. The extraction of shale gas used the controversial practice of fracking where water, sand and chemicals are pumped underground to release the gas from the rock.

Fracking is also the activity that was recently suspended in Lancashire following a number of minor earthquakes in the Blackpool area. The suspension has just been lifted following assurances that the process was safe.

Millstone grit, which forms much of the upland fells of the Pennines, has a huge potential to deliver shale gas and Teesdale is the one of the areas under consideration. The Government may allow some of these areas to be offered in the next onshore oil and gas exploration licensing round.



Plans have been submitted to build a 78-metre wind turbine, which is nearly four times as high as the Angel of the North, next to the A66 close to Bowes. Aggregate Industries are proposing to erect the turbine at Hulands Quarry just outside the village. As the site is only 110 metres away from the A66, objectors are concerned that the structure would be a distraction to drivers and could potentially cause accidents. There are also fears that the turbine would overshadow the houses in the village as well as the 12th century ruined Norman Castle.

BARNARD Castle Ramblers are looking for people to help them walk a 247-mile route in one day as part of a walking festival being planned for next year to celebrate a journey made by the celebrated walker Alfred Wainwright. In September, 1938, Wainwright went on an 11-day, 211-mile walk through the Pennines starting from Settle and ending at Hadrian's Wall. He wrote the story of his walk, but it was not published until 1986. It was

updated in 1998 as A Pennine Journey – a circular walk of 247 miles, more than half of which is in the North Pennines Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

Now the Stanhope-based charity Friends of the North Pennines are planning ‘A Pennine Journey Festival’ for September 2013, with help from the dale’s rambling groups. The festival will be a week of walks and other activities across Teesdale and Weardale and as part of the festival, every section of Wainwright’s route will be walked by somebody on Saturday, September 28.

How do you move a 14th century ruined castle ??

Seems that Goggle Maps have had no problem in relocating Northumberland’s Dunstanburgh Castle away from it’s iconic coastline location on one of the country’s most beautiful shorelines to over 1 km inland next to the village of Dunstan.

And no-one even noticed the removal vans !!

The Howardian Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty lies nestled between the North York Moors National Park to the north, the Yorkshire Wolds to the east and the Vale of York to the south. Covering 204 square km this captivating landscape of wooded rolling countryside, patchwork of arable and pasture fields, scenic villages and historic country houses with classic parkland landscapes soon celebrates the silver jubilee of it’s AONB designation. To mark this anniversary in an appropriate but low-key way thanks to plans are being made to install 25 natural log benches throughout the 16 mile west-to-east length of the AONB. The simplicity of the natural oak logs, which have been sourced from woodland in the AONB as part of normal woodland management work, will hopefully be appreciated by all both locals and visitors. Most of the seats will be installed during the coming spring and summer.



THE SHEEP.

That’s it lads, try to act nonchalant and then when he turns around we start following him again.

Northumberland National Park Authority has revealed that it’s axed visitor centre at Rothbury could be replaced by a new tourist service. Talks are at an advanced stage with an unnamed party over the provision of a form of visitor service within the existing visitor centre building although this service would not be a new tourist information centre. The identity of the party is not being revealed as the discussions are currently at a sensitive stage.

The authority's two award winning visitor centres at Rothbury and Ingram both closed at the end of the 2012 tourist season due to funding cuts. Talks are also planned between the authority and Ingram Parish Council over the future of that site.

A new project is being set up to protect threatened birds within Teesdale. The project, the Birds and Farm Landscapes scheme, is being run by the Mid-Teesdale Project Partnership and being funded by the Heart of Teesdale Landscape Partnership and is aimed at improving habitat and feeding conditions for under threat farmland birds such as grey partridge, tree sparrows and barn owls. Due to the wettest summer for a century the grey partridge has had a disastrous breeding season and numbers of this bird have plummeted.

The three year project will also provide more bird boxes, establish a new tree planting group and provide parkland and field boundary trees with protection from livestock. There will also be a small grants scheme to encourage the creation of wild bird seed plots, restoration of hedgerows and the re-wilding of field margins.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

The 25 mile Allendale Challenge is organised by North of Tyne Mountain Rescue Team to raise funds for the team and this year is being held on 6th April. Considered by many, including myself after several completions in past years, to be one of the toughest challenge walks around and is always very popular. The route covers some of the finest peat bogs in the North Pennines with an anti-clockwise loop from Allendale Town taking in Hard Rigg, Black Hill, Kilhope Law before returning to the town via the Spartylea, The Drag, and Ladlewell. Being so early in the year the weather on the event can be as challenging as the terrain, which just makes it all the more fun.

Entries close on Tuesday 26th March and can be made on-line via the rescue team's website at <http://www.northoftynesearchandrescue.org.uk/>



The Forests Campaign Network, the umbrella body of the sixteen groups that were involved in the successful protests against the Government's sell-off of the public forests, has written an open letter to environment ministers and the Chancellor George Osborne stating that spending cuts are harming the public forests that were saved from being sold off. The network, which says it represents more than half a million active campaigners,

are demanding assurances that cash will be devoted to maintain the public forest estate.

Cuts in funding are having a negative impact nationally with all Forestry Commission-led educational activities being stopped; many visitor facilities, trails, footpaths and drainage ditches not being adequately maintained and in some cases closed. In addition, reductions in Forestry Commission funding have also resulted in reduced vigilance against illegal felling and vandalism of some woodlands, activities that are placing further strain on police resources.

The findings of the Independent Panel on Forestry estimate that to maintain the nation's Public Forest Estate's capital value and sustain the current levels of benefits over time requires an annual requirement at £22m. This contrasts sharply with its current level of £20m and plans to reduce it to £18m in 2013, and then to what is considered a totally inadequate level of less than £13m by 2015. The open letter from the FCN says "At a time when England's woodlands and forests face serious threats from disease and climate change –most notably Ash Dieback – a depleted, overburdened FC staff are clearly doing their utmost to protect and preserve the PFE but the acute financial pressure coupled with the prospect of further drastic cuts to their budget is preventing the long-term planning and allocation of resources vital to maintaining the health and public benefits of the PFE and to improve income generation for investment in its future success."

To put the spending on our nation's forests into perspective, it is estimated that the value of benefits provided by the Public Forest Estate is £400m annually, not including health, cultural and social benefits.



WALKS

Plans to change old railway lines between Bishop Auckland and Barnard Castle into a walkway linking the two towns are being resurrected. The original scheme, called the South West Durham Heritage Corridor, was dropped in 2010 due to funding problems and the high cost of maintaining the route once established, which some estimates put at £6,000 per kilometre. But now a new potential source of funding has resulted in the idea coming to the fore again. The proposed walkway would follow the route of the former Bishop Auckland, Haggerleases and Barnard Castle line which was closed in the 1960's. Prior to the original project being dropped, the section of the route between Bishop Auckland and Spring Gardens had been completed and has

proved to be very popular with the public. If the scheme does go ahead then the walkway between the two towns would be nearly two metres wide and suitable for disabled people, cyclists and horse riders in addition to walkers.

The resurgence of lead mining in the North Pennines is getting a little closer with a £200 million bid to reopen the former Rampgill mine at Nenthead. Exploratory drilling is underway in order to assess the scale of lead and zinc deposits at the mine. Both Cumbria County Council and the North Pennines AONB Partnership have indicated their support for the project which, if it went ahead, would bring three hundred jobs to the area.

For the red squirrels in the region, 2013 looks like being a good year. At the start of last year, Red Squirrels Northern England (RSNE) received funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund, the Biffa Award, the Sita Trust and others. The first year of funding has allowed RSNE to carry out control activities around designated red squirrel reserves to curb the effects of the grey squirrel and it has also allowed them to undertake the largest ever survey of squirrel distribution. The first stage of the survey took place in the spring and involved volunteers and staff monitoring 300 sites to find out where red and grey squirrels are living across Northumberland, Cumbria, County Durham, North Yorkshire and Merseyside. This survey was repeated in the autumn and will continue twice yearly for the life of the project. The next three years will see a continuation of the work carried out in 2012, with more funds being raised to increase conservation work in both southeast Northumberland and Slaley Forest, south of Hexham. Northumberland Wildlife Trust is working closely with the project partners Natural England, the Red Squirrel Survival Trust and Forestry Commission to deliver the programme.

SNIPPET

Would you believe that metal thieves are now targeting farm gates !
Apparently a number of them have now gone missing in Teesdale and the police are encouraging farmers to security mark their gates.

North Yorkshire's Dalby Forest has received recognition as a dark sky discovery site. The forest on the North York Moors has been declared a 'Milky Way' class venue for stargazers, the top rating that can be given and comes due to its lack of light pollution and its commitment to popularising astronomy. This makes the 8,600 acre forest the third dark sky discovery site in Yorkshire and one of only fifty throughout the whole of the UK. The first observatory was opened in Dalby in 2001 by the late Sir Patrick Moore, this being subsequently replaced by the current purpose-built domes that stand in front of the forest's new visitor centre and the recognition comes after a campaign by the Scarborough and Ryedale Astronomical Society supported by the Forestry Commission.

The first Durham Dales Walking Festival is being planned for later this year and the organisers are hoping that hundreds of walkers will turn up to give their support for the event. The festival, which is being planned for the autumn, is being linked to the 75th anniversary celebrations of the Pennine Journey walk by Alfred Wainwright and will feature walks to cater for all ages and abilities, with some fully accessible routes planned as well as talks and other promotional events. The aim of the event being to encourage visitors to both visit and stay overnight in the very under-rated Durham Dales and it is hoped that it will be linked to other events and initiatives in both Teesdale and Weardale.

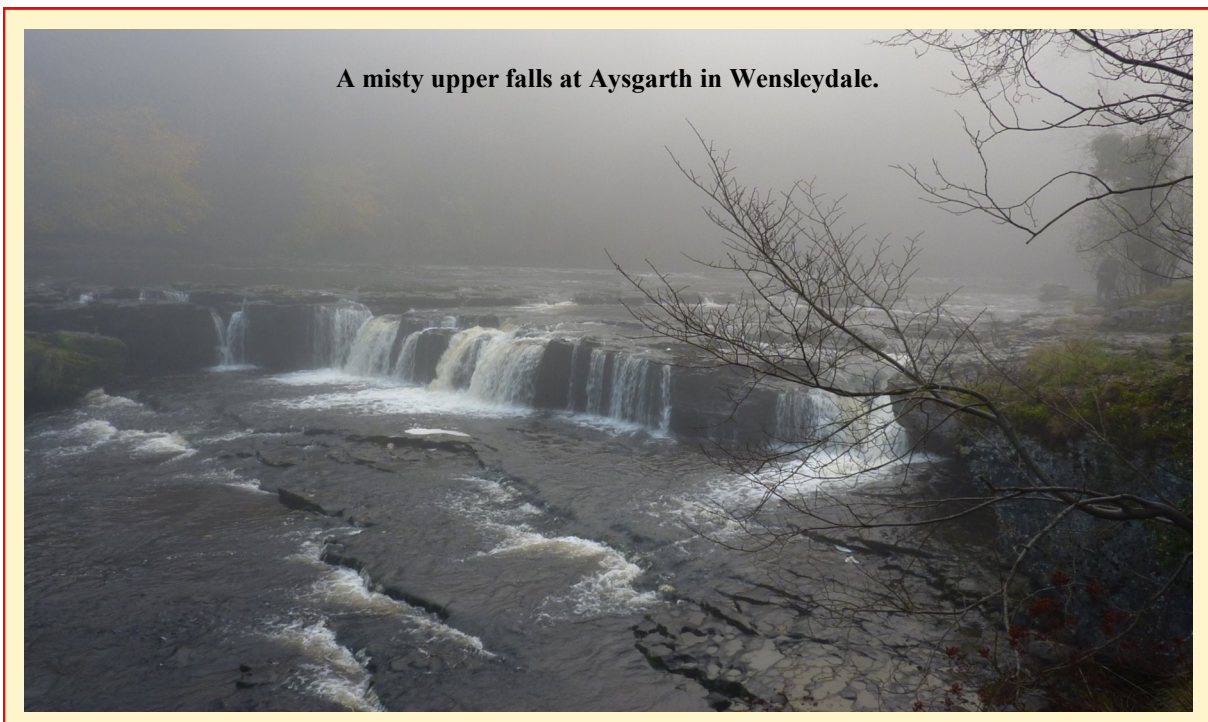
The festival has financial backing from North Pennine Dales Leader and Durham County Council, while Teesdale Marketing, the not-for-profit organisation which promotes Teesdale, has been instrumental in putting the event together. For more details go to www.teesdalemarketing.co.uk.

Swaledale Mountain Rescue Team had a call-out during the month to rescue a couple, who while in the middle of a passionate embrace fell down a steep embankment. The incident happened in Hawes around 12.30 pm on a Saturday night and the rescue team joined firefighters, ambulance crew and air ambulance staff in retrieving the unfortunate couple. It is believed that the woman fell backwards over a wall near the entrance to the Upper Wensleydale Business Park and fell twelve foot down the steep embankment. The male is thought to have attempted to catch his partner but the momentum of her fall pulled over the top of the wall and down the slope. The male was taken to hospital suffering possible abdominal and leg injuries while the female suffered possible injuries to her pelvis.

Amidst all the furore on the construction of windfarms comes a new study that suggests that the lifespan of windfarms is significantly shorter than the expected 20 to 25 years. Just before Christmas, the Renewable Energy Foundation published *The Performance of Wind Farms in the United Kingdom and Denmark*, showing that the economic life of onshore wind turbines is between 10 and 15 years, not the 20 to 25 years projected by the wind industry itself, and used for government projections. The report also raises questions surrounding the subsidies currently paid out to the industry with suspicions confirmed that decades of generous subsidies to the wind industry have failed to encourage the innovation needed to make the sector competitive. In essence, wind turbines both onshore and offshore cost too much and wear out far too quickly to offer the developing world a realistic alternative to coal.

The study has been conducted by one of the UK's leading energy and environmental economists, Professor Gordon Hughes, of the University of Edinburgh, and anonymously peer-reviewed. It applies rigorous statistical analysis to years of actual windfarm performance data from sites in both the UK and Denmark with the results showing that, after allowing for variations in wind speed and site characteristics, the average load factor of windfarms declines substantially as they get older, probably due to wear and tear. By ten years of age the contribution of an average UK wind farm to meeting electricity demand has declined by a third with the result that it is rarely economic to operate windfarms for more than twelve to fifteen years.

As a consequence, the lifetime cost per unit (MWh) of electricity generated by wind power will be considerably higher than official estimates. However, the study comes at a time when official figures produced by the Department of Energy and Climate Change show that nearly 12 per cent of the country's electricity came from renewable sources in the third quarter of 2012, equalling the record set in quarter four of 2011 of 11.7 per cent. It was the third time that renewables have exceeded 10 per cent of UK electricity in a three-month period.



The 2012 breeding season for the grey seals on the Farne Islands off the Northumberland coast has produced more pups than any other for the last decade. The breeding season for the seals runs from September to December and in last year's around 1,600 babies were raised partially as a result of the mild autumn. The Farne colony, at around 4,000 individuals, is the largest on the east coast of England and has been monitored by the National Trust since 1951, the longest running study of grey seals in the world.

The world famous Jodrell Bank Centre for Astrophysics has thrown its weight behind a bid to gain protected status for Northumberland's stunning dark skies. Kielder Water & Forest Park Development Trust, Northumberland National Park Authority and Kielder Observatory Astronomical Society are working on the plan to create Europe's biggest area of protected night sky in the region. A key element in the application process to the Tucson-based International Dark Skies Association has now been completed. An external lighting audit covering nearly all of Kielder Water & Forest Park and 140 square miles of the adjoining Northumberland National Park (NNP) has revealed that nearly 80% of external lights comply with the strict rules laid down by the IDA. Bid chiefs are delighted with this initial finding, but want to see that figure rise above 80% to further strengthen the application. The audit shows where changes could be made to achieve extra compliance and building owners will be approached to see how they can help tackle light polluting fixtures.

Dark Sky status would embrace up to 400 square miles of Northumberland, with Kielder Water & Forest Park becoming England's first Dark Sky Park, and Northumberland National Park being designated Europe's largest Dark Sky Reserve. Light metre readings have revealed that parts of the county retain some of England's starriest skies, but light pollution is encroaching. The darkest pocket in the National Park is around the Otterburn Ranges with other good sky ratings being obtained in Holystone, near Rothbury and Harbottle. A small army of volunteers using special handheld devices undertook the survey on clear and often chilly moonless nights. Readings for Kielder Water & Forest Park peaked at around 21.7, with the average being 21.5. Light metres can reliably judge lighting conditions up to a score of 22 (pitch black) and most bright towns would give a reading of about 17 - the difference between seeing thousands of stars and just a handful.

In years past there used to be twelve historic walks from Barnard Castle to places such as the Meeting of the Waters at Greta Bridge and Egglestone Abbey but now they sadly overgrown and lie in a state of neglect. The prospect of having at least some of these restored has now been brought to the fore. The Heart of Teesdale Landscape Project, which is currently revamping the area of Scar Top next to the ruins of the Castle, are now looking ahead to their next projects and one possibility is the town's historic woodland walks. Plans are being drawn up for the restoration of Flatts Wood which will start later this year and will include path and drainage improvements to make the woods better for walkers.

Photo shows Egglestone Abbey.



There are fears that the dwindling population of adders in the North Pennines can lead to what is called inbreeding depression, a condition that could cause problems such as mutations from missing eyes to deformed spines, to adders being born dead. Now the University of Sunderland has teamed up with Durham Wildlife Trust and Durham County Council to carry out a genetic survey of the adder population in geographically isolated areas of West Durham, testing DNA samples to reveal how much genetic diversity there is among the population. This is the first survey of its kind in the region, and results from a growing concern that the snakes are at risk due to their numbers declining through loss of natural habitat and breeding grounds. Samples of the adders' skins were collected over several weeks and dead snakes are also being analysed in the laboratories at the university, checking for markers which suggest inbreeding has taken place. The work is part of a project to find out if decreasing numbers of adders in the North East has led to inbreeding among colonies of the UK's only venomous snake and highlights a growing concern for wildlife within the UK, that of maintaining genetic diversity in isolated populations. With this research it is hoped to generate some preliminary data for substantial research, with a view to protecting the adder before it becomes dangerously inbred.



RECRUITMENT

The North York Moors National Park Authority is currently recruiting voluntary rangers and are asking anybody who enjoys working outside and who has some spare time to get in touch. Duties include patrolling the National Park, helping out with events, providing information to the public, joining working parties, looking after the network of footpaths and bridleways, and providing help and advice to landowners, farmers, local residents and visitors. Anyone over the age of 18 can be a voluntary ranger (VR) and, over the years, people from all walks of life and with an amazing array of interests have enjoyed being part of the National Park family. Some VRs use their experience with the National Park as a stepping stone to set them off on a career, some do it as a pleasant change from the day job and others enjoy 'giving something back' in their retirement.

For more information about how to become a voluntary ranger, visit www.northyorkmoors.org.uk/caring/volunteers.

Archaeology volunteers have unearthed a water mill which is at least 500 years old on Yearsley Moor, near Helmsley, a highly significant and important find for the area. Official archaeological records show no mention of a mill nor do the earliest Ordnance Survey maps that were produced in the 1850s. However, this may not be quite so surprising as some of the later fragments of pottery recovered from the site suggest that the mill went out of use around the mid eighteenth century.

The find is the conclusion of three years of painstaking research and field survey work by Yearsley Moor Archaeological Project volunteers and North York Moors National Park apprentices under the supervision of professional archaeologist Luigi Signorelli with the team being funded by the Lime and Ice Project, a partnership of six organisations. They have found the remains of a complex of buildings in the undergrowth with one of them containing a large millstone. The group has also discovered the outline of nearby ponds and watercourses that may well have served the mill. However, the remarkable feature of the site is the large amount of finds that have been recovered so far; these have included pottery, bone, corroded metal, an undated coin, glass and some puzzling stone objects. The archaeology team now hope to confirm the presence of the mill and to answer more

important questions such as how it worked and when it was first constructed.

The Forestry Commission has claimed that a reduction in waymarked paths is part of a process which has seen improvements to information provided for walkers. The Commission, which looks after 10,500 hectares of forest around Rothbury, with major sites at Kidland, Uswayford, Harbottle, Thrunton and Harwood, was replying to concerns raised after it was revealed that the distance of waymarked paths would be reduced from 35 miles to 13, with the number of different routes reduced from twelve to six. All of the routes will still be open and accessible to walkers, but will not be waymarked or maintained by rangers.



The Commission explained that the removal of the waymarkings was part of an ongoing process which has seen 'revamped and renewed' information for walkers as well as work on the website and that the routes which will no longer be waymarked tend to be those that run alongside forest roads or those well-known to local people. Following the funding cuts to the Commission, this move ensures that rangers spend their time on the routes that are deeper into the forest with the longer more challenging-to-follow paths being continued to be waymarked. The Commission has also found that nine out of ten visitors to the forests in the area tend to have Ordnance Survey maps with them as well. In addition, as part of this revamping process more up-to-date information has been provided for visitors in all the main Rothbury area Forestry Commission-managed woodlands to ensure that the correct information on the route is given at the start of the walk.

Photo. Waymarker in Holystone Woods.

Arts Council England has awarded the Kielder Art and Architecture programme a grant of £100,000 to bring more new super-sized artworks to Britain's biggest open air art gallery, Kielder Water and Forest Park. The cash will be used not only to create another four art works to stand alongside the existing 20 pieces, but also to allow some of the 330,000 visitors who come to Kielder each year to be involved in the creation of new works. Starting in February, the new programme called "Seeing the Woods from the Trees" will offer the public a range of opportunities to get involved with visual art and artists, including a series of workshops and master classes. For more information on events and activities go to www.kielderartandarchitecture.com or www.visitkielder.com/events.



Photo shows the Skyscape installation.

A PIECE of Teesdale's 19th century industrial heritage has been restored. Barningham Lime Kiln was once one of more than 800 operating throughout the dales but its remains were crumbling away and were practically hidden from view by overgrown trees. Now it has been restored by the Barningham Estate, supported by the Heart of Teesdale Landscape Partnership's community initiatives fund. The kiln, which is known as a draw kiln with the burnt limestone being drawn out of the kiln through a draw hole, was reportedly still in use until the outbreak of the Second World War and could have produced as much as 10 tons of quicklime per day. The limestone used in the kiln coming from a quarry above the kiln which extended through woods to the west.

The restored kiln is accessible via a public footpath to the west of Barningham and now also features an interpretation board. A spokesman for Barningham Local History Group, said: "The lime kilns played an important role in the village for well over a century. We're delighted the restoration will encourage public awareness of them and their place in local industry and agriculture."

During the month Cleveland Mountain Rescue Team were called out three times in the one day to give assistance to people injured while sledging. The first time the team has responded three times in a 24-hour period.

The team's help was requested at 12.15pm after a woman broke her ankle sledging in the old quarry area at Great Ayton Woods. An hour and a quarter later ambulance staff called for help with a man who had hurt his head while sledging in Woodlands Country Park. By the time the mountain rescue team arrived, the ambulance crew had managed to get the injured person to their vehicle. A third sledging casualty need help 20 minutes later on the Eston Hills after she injured her back when she came off the toboggan. Two Land Rovers and nine team members were diverted to each incident from a training day taking place in the Great Ayton and Guisborough area.

And who says that sledging can be such fun ...

TROLLS IN THE NORTH PENNINES

In the 17th to 19th centuries, the North Pennines were the centre of the world's lead production with the ore-field stretching down the Allendales of Northumberland in the north, down through the Durham hills, to the Yorkshire Dales in the south. Life for the miners was hard and there were many fears, fancies and superstitions governing the mining way of life. Most mines had a 'witching post' to ward off bad luck and evil spirits, it was considered unlucky to whistle while down a mine and a woman was never, ever allowed to cross the portal of a mine.

The writer, Halliwell Sutcliffe, in his 1929 book 'The Striding Dales' described the miners of Greenhow Hill and their superstitions. They "knew the mystery things that happen in the underworld, where galleries probe into the tortured bowels of the earth, and the spirits imprisoned there resent intrusion. They were not fanciful men, the Greenhow miners, but quiet, stalwart, prone to say little. It was hard to break their reticence: yet once in a long while they would speak of hidden matters. There was one who



reached the mine head before his fellows, and went down the ladders alone, impatient for his work. They came later on and found him dead in a narrow gallery, with queer marks about his throat. Well, poor lad, he should have known it was not good to go singly into any mine. The trolls fear numbers, but are wolves on the track of a lonely man. That was his comrades' summing up."

The bid to build the longest public footbridge in the world is moving a bit closer. The £1.3 million, 265m bridge across the River Tees, proposed by Teesdale Marketing and backed by Durham County Council, will link the two abutments where the old Barnard Castle to Bowes railway crossed the river. Plans will be submitted next year, after which there will be a twelve-week consultation period. The designs for the bridge being similar to one in Passerelle du L'Ebron in France.

The structure will be built a mile from the town centre and that has presented access problems for the elderly and disabled who faced a trek on muddy paths to get there. Under disability laws, all new developments must be accessible for all people. The problem has now been resolved by a disabled parking area at the Deepdale layby, on the road to Lartington, and an upgraded path from that side of the River Tees.

The council estimates the bridge will bring £1.5 million into Barnard Castle each year and 29,000 new visitors to the town annually. Similar bridges exist in France and Ullapool in Scotland, a structure which attracts 74,000 people a year.

If the project does go ahead, the bridge will also have another attraction in the form of a boxed-shape viewing platform protruding from the side and out over the gorge and it is now proposed for this viewing platform to be glass-floored in order to give thrill-seekers a "leap of faith" sensation. Standing over a hundred foot above the Tees on a glass floor will definitely be a sensation to be experienced.

The Teesdale Way and several other walks, including one in our book 'Mid-Teesdale Walks', arrive at the abutment on the south side of the river before descending through woods and crossing the river at a point further downstream. Hopefully the bridge will come to fruition giving the opportunity of entering Barnard Castle over what promises to be quite a spectacular suspension bridge.

Photo shows the south abutment of the old viaduct across the river.



In Tynedale the native red squirrel is winning its battle for survival against the invasive grey. Conservation volunteers have reported an unprecedented number of red squirrel sightings at Greenhead, Gilsland and Featherstone over the past year, and wildlife experts insist there has been significant progress in other parts of the area too. Now more volunteers are being sought in a bid to ensure that the natural habitats at Kielder, Wark, Redesdale and elsewhere are preserved.

Tynedale is one of the country's last remaining strongholds for the red squirrel after an influx of American greys, which carry the deadly squirrel pox virus, over the past century. Now people are seeing them in their gardens in areas where they have never seen them before. There is a colony of five reds in one garden, and another is a regular feeding place for squirrels. This is the first time that reds have outnumbered the greys in terms of local sightings for many a year.



The Wynch Bridge, Tynedale.

Reader's letters and emails.

We are always willing to print reader's comments and reply to questions. Both the email and postal address are on the Trailguides website.

Contributions from readers will always be considered for inclusion within this magazine. Please feel free to send any articles, news or other pieces that you feel would be of interest to our readers to trailguides@uwclub.net.

THE SHIVERING STONE by GEOFF HOLLAND

With the pale scent of early spring wafting across the rooftops I was eager to be out across the undulating tops of the Cheviot Hills. I parked near Windyhaugh in Upper Coquetdale and, as I sauntered along the rough track to the remote farmstead of Uswayford, the sleepy-eyed sun climbed above the broad-shouldered Shillhope Law.

I have visited Bloodybush Edge on numerous occasions by various well-trodden routes. Now I was intent on a totally different approach. A quick intake of breath and then I forded the Clay Burn and clambered up the steep and rarely-walked slopes of Hen Hill towards my objective, little more than 1 mile away.

A tangle of converging fences and a pristine white triangulation pillar mark the boggy top of Bloodybush Edge, the sixth highest of the Cheviot Hills. At 610 metres above sea level, I had reached the highest point of the walk. The main goal of the day, however, still lay ahead. Setting my compass, I tip-toed across a pathless minefield of heather-covered peat holes. After 400 knee-twisting metres, I reached the little-visited Shivering Stone, not so much a large single stone more a cascade of small, weather-beaten boulders.

From this lonely place, high in Northumberland, I enjoyed unimpeded views across the tree tops of the vast Kidland Forest. Concealing a complex system of slacks, cleughs, sikes and burns the forest covers an area which, in 1825, was described as consisting of, "a number of lofty,



The Shivering Stone

verdant hills, of conical form". These days the hills are dressed in a trendy shade of `Forestry Commission Green` which does little to spoil the fantastic panorama stretching from the Simonside Hills to the border-straddling Windy Gyle.

As the crow flies I was now 3 miles from my starting point but, with no straight-line return route possible, I made tracks across the unremarkable, boot-sucking summit of Yarnspath Law before descending to the former farmstead of Fairhaugh. Situated in a forest clearing on the banks of the delightful Usway Burn, this was the perfect place to catch my breath before finally making my way back to Windyhaugh and the beautiful River Coquet. I vowed to return soon.

FULL DETAILS OF THIS ROUTE ALONG WITH A SELECTION OF PHOTOGRAPHS TAKEN ALONG THE WAY CAN BE FOUND IN THE BOOK OF WALKS, `THE HILLS OF UPPER COQUETDALE` BY GEOFF HOLLAND. THIS BOOK IS AVAILABLE DIRECT FROM WWW.TRAILGUIDES.CO.UK FOR £8.50 PLUS POSTAGE AND PACKAGING

COMPETITION

On February the 28th we release the latest in our range of Walking North East guidebooks. With this latest book we go back to Northumberland and, with Kenneth Bunn, explore both the history and the country around our largest ancient monument, Hadrian's Wall. As part of the launch of Kenneth's book, 'Walks in Hadrian's Wall Country' we are holding another competition where you could win one of two free copies of the book.

And what do you have to do ?

Look at the photo below, which has proved to be one of our most popular 'sheep photos', and come up with a witty caption for it

The two entries that make us chuckle the most will each win a copy of the book.

Closing date for submissions is the 28th February after which we will send the prizes out.

To submit your entry just send an email with your caption on to trailguides@uwclub.net

But please keep your entries clean and avoid obscenities. All entries submitted both from the Facebook page and the Newsletter may appear on both of these mediums.



PUBLICATION LIST

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

Durham

Ancient Stones.
Hamsterley Forest.
The Barningham Trail.
The High Hills of Teesdale.
Mid-Teesdale Walks.
Walks from Stanhope.
Walking in Weardale.

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.

Coming soon:

Walks in Hadrian's Wall Country.

North Yorkshire

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

New, revised edition.

All books can be obtained via our website at www.trailguides.co.uk or alternatively just ask your local book shop to order them.

FORTHCOMING BOOK

February sees the release of another new publication in our Walking North East series of guidebooks. 'Walks in Hadrian's Wall Country' by Kenneth Bunn will be released on the 28th February and promises to be just as popular as Ken's previous book, 'Walks Around Rothbury and Coquetdale'.

The new book follows the same format as the previous one, with eight walks lavishly illustrated by Ken's detailed sketch maps and drawings plus numerous colour photographs showing the rich heritage that this part of Northumberland holds. Almost everybody has heard of Hadrian's Wall but how many of us have actually taken the opportunity of walking in the footsteps of the legions and following a section of this, the country's largest ancient monument. With Ken to guide you round the Wall and its history, you wouldn't put a foot wrong.

MONTHLY SPECIAL OFFER

And what is the special offer for February then.

How about a 3 for the price of 2 offer.

With the re-release of 'Walking the Hills of Upper Swaledale' we once again have three excellent guidebooks to what is general considered to be the most scenic of the Yorkshire Dales, the beautiful and rugged Swaledale.

'Walking the Hills of Upper Swaledale' which explores the high hills and wild moors above the dale, 'Walks from Gunnerside' exploring the countryside around the centre of the dale including a number of the main lead mining areas, and 'Walks around Reeth and Upper Swaledale' which from the capital of the dale explores a variety of countryside and the valley's distant past with it's legacy of Prehistoric and 'Dark Age' remains.

Now, for a limited period, all three of these books can be had for the price of two. For the price of £19.98, plus postage, these books can be winging their way towards you giving you a saving of £ over their normal list price.

This offer runs from the 1st to the 28th of February and only applies to sales direct from our website. See our website at www.trailguides.co.uk to order.

This offer does not apply to purchases of PDF's.

FRONT COVER PHOTO.

A very cold and icy Fendrith Hill in Teesdale.

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