

Walking North East

OCTOBER 2013



Cover photo.

Low cloud and mist in Ryedale on the North York Moors on the second Sunday of the month. Atmospheric and a good indicator of how the weather was going to turn out for the rest of the month.

This walk will feature in a new book, 'Walking around Helmsley and Ryedale' which will be available early in the new year.



www.trailguides.co.uk

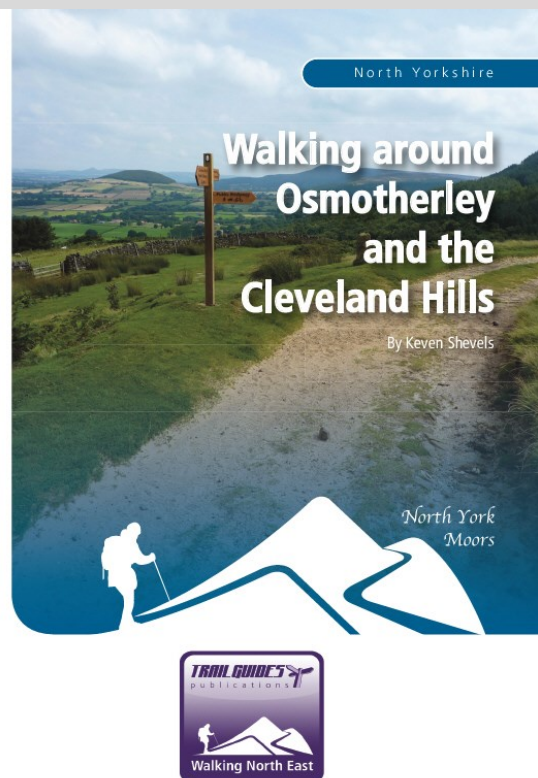
NEW PUBLICATION

Our first walking guide to the North York Moors is now available from our website at www.trailguides.co.uk

Titled "Walking around Osmotherley and the Cleveland Hills", the book covers nine walks in the varied landscape that surrounds this historic little village. The walks cover a range of distances with the shortest being just over three miles and the longest around nine miles in length. Here in this corner of the Moors, where the rugged Cleveland Hills meet the more gentle, rolling Hambleton Hills, the countryside gives a wide selection for the walker to explore from moors to hill top meadows and the woods and forests that line the escarpment edges.

This is also a place where mankind has left its indelible mark shaping both the valley's and the hills. Here you can walk with Neolithic man and touch the standing stones that are his legacy, see the stone settlements left behind by the Bronze and Iron Age farmers, explore the effects that Medieval religious orders had on the landscape and even learn how the Moors were used to defend the people of Middlesbrough during the Second World War.

Priced at £9.99, this full colour book is available direct from our website or alternatively try Amazon or just go into your local bookshop and ask for it by name. The book is also available as a PDF download from our website priced at £4.99.



Walking News :

Experts at the Forestry Commission are predicting a riot of colour as the leaves change this autumn. The year has been one with an ideal mix of sunshine and rain and this has meant a great growing season for the nation's trees, providing perfect conditions for the sugars to build up in the leaves, these sugars helping them change colour and develop their vibrant autumn shades. At the beginning of October the early waves of colour will be emerging and it's predicted that this will reach its peak by the third week in October, through to the first week of November. This is only a very short window to see these beautiful changes occurring and so the Forestry Commission are encouraging people to get out and see what the forests and trees have on offer this autumn.

Visitors to woods and forests this autumn are also in for a spectacular show of forest fruits and may even get to see wildlife foraging amongst branches and on the ground, as the season is looking like a bumper year for the fruits and seeds of many trees and shrubs. Indications are that ash, English oak, sweet chestnut, beech, hawthorn, hornbeam and small-leaved lime trees will produce large crops, laden with seeds, fruits and nuts, all because of one of nature's mysterious events known as 'masting'. Bumper seed years are known as 'mast years'; a natural phenomenon where some tree species produce very large crops of seeds in some years, compared to almost none in others.

A protected bird of prey has died after being found with a suspected gunshot wound in Northumberland in early October. The adult female buzzard was discovered in the Blanchland area near Hexham by a member of the public. It was taken to a nearby wildlife sanctuary at Ladyhill Farm in Simonburn where it died from lead poisoning and infection a few hours after being brought in. Police have revealed that a couple of weeks ago a tawny owl was also shot in the same area. Now they are appealing for anyone with information about either incident to contact them.

Natural England, the body that oversees the Environmental Stewardship Scheme and the resulting payments to farmers, has indicated that there will be a gap in the funding of payments between January 2015 and 2016. The Stewardship Scheme has led to many farmers opening up permissive paths, relaying hedgerows and implementing other environmental initiatives to enhance the natural habitat on their land. Now this work to protect the English countryside faces a massive threat following news that these environmental payments are likely to be halted for a year. With many farmers looking at the very survival of their businesses, the loss of this income stream may not lead to a positive outcome for wildlife and the countryside in general. The funding gap is as a result of the way that Defra is applying some of the reforms of the Common Agricultural Policy. However, European farmers and those in both Scotland and Wales are unlikely to suffer the same cutbacks as their English counterparts.

Work will be started over the next few weeks in a bid to help protect a rare and important piece of bog in the Simonside Hills. The western flank of Simonside, between the heights of Tosson Hill and Ravensheugh, is an area of heather and blanket bog called Boddle Moss. This is a deep peat area that provides an important service to wildlife and the people in the Coquet Valley below Simonside and is also one of Europe's Special Areas of Conservation. During October, Northumberland National Park, North Pennines AONB Partnership and Northumberland Wildlife Trust are joining forces to protect this precious wetland as part of the shared work of the Northern Upland Chain Local Nature Partnership. Northumberland Wildlife Trust volunteers and National Park staff are undertaking the spadework of the bog restoration project while the work is being funded through the North Pennines AONB Partnership.

Blanket bogs are important stores of carbon and maintaining blanket bogs on the flat areas on the top of the Simonside ridge and deep peat areas such as Boddle Moss and Caudhole Moss contributes to reducing the effects of climate change. Peat is formed in waterlogged conditions which prevents the plants, mostly sphagnum mosses, decaying in the normal way when they die. Instead, they build up very slowly to form peat. Digging ditches to drain bogs used to be common, as it dried out the surface so that sheep could graze or red grouse could nest. Unfortunately, this ruins the bogs too which need to be waterlogged so that peat can continue to form and bog plants can grow.

Conservationists and landowners are now blocking ditches with using plastic piling dams driven into the peat with rubber mallets to re-wet and protect these important habitats. Around 200 plastic piling dams will be put

A bit of a murky day up the top end of Teesdale on the first Sunday of the month and quite windy. The higher up the dale you went, the thicker the low cloud.

The photo shows the Pennine Way going up the dale from opposite the High Force quarry. For those prepared to look, this small patch of flat land next to the river contains a surprising amount of ancient remains.

This walk will appear in the forthcoming guide 'Walking in Teesdale' which will be released before Christmas.



in over 6 days by the volunteers. Plastic piling is a technique pioneered in the Border Mires about 10 years ago.

The first grey seal pup of the new season has been born on the Farne Islands off the Northumberland coast. Last year more than 1,600 seal pups were born on the islands, an increase on the previous year bring the total number of seals in the colony up to 4,800, making it England's largest breeding population of grey seals. The arrival comes just a few weeks before the start of the National Trust's seal tours, which give people the chance to experience the trials and tribulations of a seal pup in its first weeks of life and visitors will be able to land on the seal colony for a close-up view of the animals. The tours run from October 14-31 and cost £10 for adults and £5 for children. For more information go to www.nationaltrust.org.uk

Births of the seal pups will peak in the coming weeks with some pups will turn up on beaches as they learn to swim and feed. The mother is usually not too far away keeping an eye on them. In these circumstances the biggest risk that the pups face is from disturbance and so Northumberland Wildlife Trust is asking people who come across young seals to simply leave them alone and to ensure that any dogs are kept under control.

The trust is also asking for help from anyone who comes across a dead seal to report it on 0191 284 6884 or email steve.lowe@northwt.org.uk with details of the exact location and, if possible, a digital photo of the dead animal to help establish the cause of death. There is growing concern over an apparent rise in the number of deaths among the seals, but this has not been formally monitored in the past.

Stone obelisks are to be erected on a remote Northumberland farm to mark a 150-mile trek that was walked to highlight the work of a cancer charity. Last year four friends from Daft as a Brush Cancer Patient Care walked from the source of both the South and North Tyne to the sea at Tynemouth and South Shields. Now their efforts are to be officially recorded by the stones at Deadwater Farm, north of Kielder village in Northumberland. The aim is to establish the walk as a national trail to promote the charity and highlight the work of the Northern Centre for Cancer Care at the Freeman Hospital in Newcastle. The walk was the idea of former hotelier Brian Burnie, who founded the Daft as a Brush Cancer Patient Care charity a year ago to provide free transport in 10 ambulances for cancer patients receiving treatment at the Freeman Hospital. Brian was joined on the 10-day hike by volunteer ambulance drivers Dave Bowmaker and Ron Stanley and his friend of 50 years William King. The party left the moorland source of the South Tyne, and after following the South Tyne Valley to Haltwhistle, their next stop was the source of the North Tyne at Deadwater near Kielder. They walked the piers at both Tynemouth and South Shields to complete their journey.

Campaigners have called on Northumberland County Council to "urgently" heed the latest national planning guidance on wind farms, and exercise its obligation to "conserve our historic and unique environment." The Northumberland and Newcastle Society, which campaigns to protect the region's environment, has issued the plea to the council amid alarm at the damage it says is being done to the county's landscape by the rising numbers of turbines. The group has called on the authority to urgently act on the latest national planning guidance, which says local authorities should set out where turbines might be sited so as not to harm residential amenity or the county's heritage. In reply the council last night said it will be heeding the recent guidance from the Government, and working with both the society and others "in developing policies which support the delivery of renewable energy in a way which is compatible with the county's communities and its most valued landscapes."

What's in a name ?

There is a few of these dotted around the region and they always tend to bring a snigger to the schoolboy in us. However, the name Lovesome Hill is really just an example of how language changes over time. In times past, the expression 'lovesome' used to have the same meaning as our more modern word 'lovely', so all the name actually means is 'Lovely Hill'

Wanted practical, outdoors people to help maintain one of Northumberland's best attractions. The St Oswald's Way Steering Group looks after the popular long-distance walking route and is now hoping to recruit volunteer rangers to 'adopt' sections of it. The volunteers will inspect sections of the route and when and if required carry out minor improvements such as cutting back overgrowth and waymarking. The sections are, on average,

LOW SLIT MINE.

Low Slit Mine in Weardale, County Durham, was one of 17 winners at English Heritage’s annual Angel Awards thus recognizing a family’s efforts to preserve a historic lead mine which is also home to some rare remains and plants. The mine in Westgate, owned by Malcolm and James Natrass, won the Angel Award for the Best Rescue of an Industrial Building or Site at a ceremony in London hosted by awards founder Andrew Lloyd Webber. Low Slit Mine has undergone an extensive renovation to preserve the remaining mining works as well as becoming a Site of Special Scientific Interest because of the unusual lead tolerant plant community there. The site suffered a series of long term problems including ivy and tree growth damaging stone structures, vandalism and erosion of the steel mine shaft cap. Remaining original features include a rare set of bouseteams, which were compartments used to store lead ore, as well a range of items used in water power. A short video of the Low Slit Mine project can be seen at english-heritage.org.uk/angelawards or on the English Heritage YouTube channel.



This is Low Slit Lead Mine

Today, Low Slit is a tranquil beauty spot. In its lead-mining heyday it was very different, with over one hundred people working here. WB Lead developed Low Slit from the early eighteenth century. They drove a vein into the hillside and built a deep shaft. It became one of the biggest mines in the North Pennines. About 100,000 tons of lead ore was won from here. The mine closed in 1878, a victim of cheap imported lead.

A. Slit Vein
The vein of lead ore runs across the hillside. Slit was the name of the mine. Slit was the name of the mine. Slit was the name of the mine.

B. Waterwheel Pit
The waterwheel pit was used to power the waterwheel. The waterwheel was used to power the waterwheel.

C. Stables and Office
The stables and office were used for the mine. The stables were used for the mine. The office was used for the mine.

D. Shaft Head
The shaft head was used to bring ore up from the mine. The shaft head was used to bring ore up from the mine.

E. Washhouse
The washhouse was used to wash the lead ore. The washhouse was used to wash the lead ore.

F. Engine Base
The engine base was used to power the waterwheel. The engine base was used to power the waterwheel.

G. Cists over Middleage Dam
The cists over Middleage Dam were used to store water. The cists over Middleage Dam were used to store water.

H. Stone
The stone was used for the mine. The stone was used for the mine.

I. The Smithy
The smithy was used to repair tools. The smithy was used to repair tools.

J. Lead X. Stables
The stables were used for the mine. The stables were used for the mine.

K. The Washing Floor
The washing floor was used to wash the lead ore. The washing floor was used to wash the lead ore.

**In Memory of Lee Jeffs, Johnson
a true countryman
14.2.1878 - 29.10.2011**



five miles long and part of the route that runs from Warkworth along the Coquet Valley to Rothbury, then southwards to meet Hadrian's Wall near Great Whittington. The group's route manager, Martin Paminter, said: "This is a great opportunity for people to help and experience the Northumberland countryside. The work will be vital in keeping St Oswald's Way in good condition as we don't have the resources to keep an eye on the path at present. The volunteers will need to inspect their sections at least twice a year and we will provide training and expenses." People interested should email Martin on martin.paminter@stoswaldsway.com. For more details of the path, visit the website – www.stoswaldsway.com

A cut in funding for the Hadrian's Wall National Trail has given staff working for the Hadrian's Wall Trust an uncertain future and may result in redundancy for a dozen workers who are involved with the management of the £6 million trail that was launched ten years ago. As part of the Government's cut-backs there has been a change in how national trails are managed and funded across the country, resulting in a reduction of funding for the 81-mile Wall path. With direct public funding from Natural England being reduced, the protection of the archaeology and the maintenance of the trail remain the Trust's top priorities, and the Trust is seeking funding from other partners to achieve this.

A bid to create Europe's largest area of protected night sky has now been lodged with a global organisation campaigning to keep the world's skies dark. The move to designate nearly 1,500 square kilometres of Northumberland as England's first Dark Sky Park is being considered by the International Dark Skies Association (IDA) based in Tucson, USA. A decision is expected from the IDA before Christmas. The Kielder Water & Forest Park Development Trust, Northumberland National Park Authority and Kielder Observatory Astronomical Society have been working on the submission for two years and widespread support has come from residents, local councils, businesses, tourism agencies, wildlife campaigners and scientific organisations, including Jodrell Bank and the Royal Observatory at Greenwich. As part of the submission more than 300 light meter readings have been taken, underlining that Northumberland has the largest expanse of truly dark night skies remaining in England, while Kielder Observatory has shared the wonders of the Universe with over 43,000 visitors since it opened in 2008.

A new boardwalk has improved visitor access at a wildlife reserve. Joe's Pond Nature Reserve is a Site of Special Scientific Interest at Rainton Meadows, the headquarters of Durham Wildlife Trust, at Chilton Moor, near Houghton-le-Spring. The old decaying boardwalk has been replaced by sixty metres of elevated boardwalk made of recycled plastic. The £14,000 funding for the walkway has come from Darlington company Cummins Engineering, Global Giving, and the Charity Aid Foundation. The new walkway now provides a number of viewing points and also a wheelchair and pushchair-friendly route around Joe's Pond.

Lord Stones Country Park on Carlton Bank, near Stokesley has undergone a transformation to enable it to cater for a growth in visitors and also provide a hub for the remote communities surrounding it. Named after the three stones on a Bronze Age mound sited behind the cafe, the spot has attracted walkers on the Cleveland Way, the Lyke Wake Walk and the Coast to Coast routes since a cafe opened there in 1988. The 160-acre site on the north-western fringe of the North York Moors National Park has also proved a popular venue for motorbike trialists, handgliders, mountain bikers, horse riders and runners. When the number of motorcyclists frequenting the cafe grew to unmanageable levels in 2010, the site's then owner, John Simpson, was forced to reduce its opening hours. The site's new owners, the Reeve family, who run the neighbouring Urra sporting and farming estate, have made a six-figure investment in improving the site's landscaping and infrastructure, redeveloping the cafe, restaurant and shop, not just for visitors but also to provide a meeting point for residents of the surrounding area and to offer an alternative to driving to Stokesley or Swainby for essential items. The transformed site, which is due to reopen on Monday, October 14, also features improved camping facilities, including camping pods in a drive to attract more families.

National park authorities are warning that Government proposals to allow barns to be turned into homes without any planning permission could result in a sea of second homes within the parks with a drastic effect on their landscapes. The parks and other organisations are currently responding to a consultation by the Government that would allow farmers and landowners to convert unused barns and cowsheds to homes without the need for planning permission. The Country Landowners Association (CLA) has been lobbying the Government to reform planning rules on barn conversions for many years and welcomed the proposals as a boost for the rural

economy. However, national parks in the region have warned it could have severe consequences for the landscape and would not help tackle the urgent need for housing within financial reach of local residents. They are currently in the process of responding to the Government proposals. The worry of the Parks is if there is not careful control over the process of barn conversions then the result will be unsuitable sporadic development. Approval is needed within the process to ensure each dwelling that results from a barn conversion has local occupancy and is also suitable. The fear is that very expensive open market dwellings will be bought up as second homes, holiday homes or retirement homes and do little to help the local economy and reduce the opportunity for getting local housing but rather the opposite.

Environment Secretary Owen Paterson visited North Yorkshire last week where he spoke about proposals for biodiversity offsetting, where in order to boost economic growth, developers could make up for damage done to national parks by creating or enhancing habitats elsewhere.

The spectacular geology of rural County Durham is to be featured on mainstream television but don't start looking in the schedules, the programme will be shown in South Korea. A film crew from the country visited the North Pennines in Teesdale to see how the area attracts tens of thousands of visitors each year. As the filmmakers focused on High Force, Low Force and Holwick Scar they also chatted to walkers who they came across while the cameras were rolling. The Koreans came to Teesdale because as well as being part of the North Pennines AONB, it is also part of a geopark and Korea also has a geopark and they were interested in the kind of things that are done to support tourism, the kind of visitors that are attracted, the landscape and what is so special about it and the geology of the area.

Signs that mean business.

Seen outside a farm entrance at Hurst in Swaledale.



Northumberland National Park Authority in collaboration with Northumberland Fire and Rescue Service and the company TMS Europe is trialing an automated detection system that will give early warning of wildfires. The pilot is the first of its kind in the UK and will take place on the Debdon Hills, near Rothbury. These overlook the Simonside Special Area of Conservation, an area that is designated for high level protection due to the important habitat and species found there. Dry springs and summers, such as the one that occurred this year, have led to a number of wildfires across the heather moorland of the National Park in recent years. During these fires the peat soils, which have taken thousands of years to establish, catch fire and can burn down to the bedrock. These soils are irreplaceable, along with the forest, heather, game and wildlife that live on them. The occurrence of wildfires are also a significant risk to rural businesses, livestock and to the health and well-being of local populations near by.

The Automatic Wildfire Detection System which is to be piloted, is based on a hybrid system presently used in waste bunkers of inflammable materials. The infrared cameras and equipment will be mounted on an already existing mast and will be capable of detecting wildfires to a distance of 5 miles from the mast. In theory this will give a coverage of over 50,000 acres from the one camera. Any detection of heat will trigger an alarm and an operator from a remote site will train both the infrared camera and live view camera on to the identified area to determine if a wildfire exists before contacting the Fire and Rescue Services. As the detection system will be

The Stoney Man, one of a line of old boundary stones along the Arkengarthdale watershed. The stone lies at the side of the Moresdale Road, a track that crosses the watershed and which is believed to follow an old prehistoric routeway across these hills on the north side of Swaledale.

This route will feature in a book, 'Walking in Arkengarthdale', that will be released early next year.

The photo was taken on the third Sunday of the month when the weather was supposed to be sunny intervals with occasional heavy showers. As it turned out, it was the sunshine that was occasional with the showers being long and drizzly and at times a little bit more than heavy.



located in a particularly harsh outdoor environment, it is designed to withstand conditions with temperature variations between -20°C and +35°C, with wind speeds exceeding 140Km/h, and proof against rain, snow, hail, dust and insects etc.

Results will demonstrate the systems effectiveness for providing an early warning and will be shared with local, national and international stakeholders through a variety of different means and events. If successful, the possibility of expanding the system to cover a larger geographical area of Northumberland National Park will be considered, and there will be a wide range of applications for the system across the UK and abroad.

A group that helps to improve public access and recreation in the Yorkshire Dales National Park is looking for new members. The independent Yorkshire Dales Access Forum exists to work with both individuals and organisations and to provide guidance and advice on ways to improve and manage public access and opportunities for open-air recreation within the 680 square miles of the national park. The forum currently has four vacancies which it is seeking to fill. Access Forums were set up to improve access in the countryside and to help avoid conflict between those who own and work the land and those who use it for recreation and so it is important that the members have a range of interests. Current members represent interests ranging from land management and agriculture to local business and outdoor recreation. The Forum meets three times a year, although members also sit on a variety of advisory groups that meet more frequently. The deadline for applications is 18 November and anyone who would like to join can obtain more information by contacting Mohammed Dhalech via email at mohammed.dhalech@yorkshiredales.org.uk.

A nature reserve near to Durham City is being damaged by motor bike and quad bike riders. Littlewood Nature Reserve near Quarrington Hill is a Site of Special Scientific Interest and popular with both residents and visitors alike but recently has suffered damage from these illegal riders. Police are now urging anybody who has information to come forward, to contact Durham Police, call 101.

The North York Moors National Park have launched a collection of twenty-four walks on their website. The website's 'Walking' section highlights the best walks in the National Park, with walks from short family rambles to all-day moorland treks. The walks are between one mile and 11 miles long, with many that can be completed in just two or three hours and they all offer a taste of some of the most beautiful and dramatic locations in the Park. The featured walks are spread right across the, and also include several short, fairly level 'Easy Access' walks that are also suitable for wheelchairs and pushchairs. Other walks take in local landmarks, historical monuments, woodlands, coastal areas and moorland villages, including Rievaulx Abbey, the Hole of Horcum, Robin Hood's Bay, Hutton le Hole, the old Rosedale railway line and the daffodils at Farndale. The walks are all available as free, downloadable guides that come with a map, full walking instructions and interesting information about what to see and do along the way.

The organisations that are working on a bid to create Europe's largest area of protected night sky in Northumberland will find out if it has been successful by Christmas. The application to designate close to 1,500 square kilometres of the county as England's first Dark Sky Park has been submitted to the prestigious International Dark Skies Association (IDA), based in Tucson, USA. For the past two years, Kielder Water and Forest Park Development Trust, Northumberland National Park Authority and Kielder Observatory Astronomical Society have worked on the project. The area covered will stretch from Kielder and cover surrounding areas, including the Northumberland National Parks. The project aims to reduce light pollution in the area, Northumberland County Council will make a significant contribution in protecting the night sky through the use of more energy efficient and fully shielded street lights.

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.

TWO public footpaths in the Prudhoe area are to be wiped from the map because they both lead only to the middle of the Tyne and are therefore unusable. The struck-off paths, restricted byway 22 and the nearby footpath number 11, both run between Eltringham and Ovington. Although public vehicular rights do exist on byway 22, it is generally accepted that the public had not actually used it with wheeled vehicles within living memory and given the nature of the River Tyne at this location, it seems unlikely that either equestrian or pedestrian traffic will have made much, if any use of this historical crossing point. Footpath 11 has been on the definitive map since it was created in the 1950s, when a ferry operated between Eltringham and Ovington. Although the ferry stopped operating over 40 years ago, the path is still there with it officially terminating at the Ovington-Prudhoe parish boundary, halfway across the river.

HEXHAM has become the first location in the country to register a woodland as a community asset. The register is more commonly associated with at risk pubs or village shops. The recording of Dukeshouse Wood is seen as a positive move that may renew the hopes of the team attempting to buy it on behalf of the town. Earlier this year the Heritage Lottery Fund rejected a £1.2m bid to fund the woodland's purchase, but now the team behind the project has been invited to reapply albeit with scaled-back plans. Included within the Localism Act 2011, the register, designed to give community groups the right to bid for a recognised local asset, was launched in September last year. While there is no compulsion on an owner to sell and the scheme does not give first refusal to the community group, it does vouchsafe a six-month window of opportunity in the event of the asset being put up for sale, in which to come up with the cash for a viable bid. The aim is to now resubmit the HLF application at the beginning of 2014, and if the outline proposals win approval in round one, the final, detailed plans could be submitted for round two.

A project has been launched in order to boost efforts in finding the elusive pine marten on the North York Moors. The project is being launched by the organisation NatureSpy and aims to raise money to provide wild-

The nuclear threat from North Korea is taken very seriously in Swaledale as they build their own missile defence system.

Alternatively it could just be restoration work on one of the two chimneys at Hurst. The chimneys were connected to the steam engines that powered the Brown and Cat shafts in the old lead mines.



life camera traps which can then be placed in the forests. The special cameras trigger when animals pass in front of them, snapping a picture of the creature and have the ability to work all day and night for months on end. The pine marten is the second-rarest carnivorous mammal in the UK and has never been officially recorded alive in Yorkshire, although there have been regular sightings with a dead marten being discovered by a roadside in 1993. Due to the shy nature of the pine marten, its arboreal lifestyle and large territory, there is a need to cover as large an area as possible which is where the cameras come in. Pine martens resemble ferrets or stoats, but are significantly larger, with the adults growing over two feet in length, and sporting a bushy tail. To learn more about the project and see how you can help, visit www.nature-spy.co.uk.

For over twenty-five years, the Ramblers Festival of Winter Walks has encouraged people of all ages to get out and explore the region's parks, forests and mountain tops and this year is no different. Volunteers from the Ramblers will be leading a variety of wintery walks over the two weeks between December 21 and January 5. The schedule of walks gives an opportunity for anybody to join in, whether it's a merry jaunt to the pub on Christmas Eve, a festive Boxing Day walk to burn off the mince pies, or a lengthy hike to start the New Year on the right foot, there is a walk for everyone. And, for the first time, Walking for Health, run by the Ramblers and Macmillan Cancer Support, will offer short walks for those new to walking. To discover the festive walks on offer visit ramblers.org.uk/winterwalks or walkingforhealth.org.uk

Surprising what some of them take.

Police are looking for thieves after two batteries worth £300 were taken from a logging machine in the middle of Kidland Forest in Upper Coquetdale, Northumberland.

I just hope that they had a long, heavy walk back to their vehicle !!

Work is starting this month on the restoration of a number of woodland paths in Flatts Wood, Barnard Castle. The Heart of Teesdale Partnership aims to both restore and enhance the walks and banks that lead from the Scar Top area in the town. All the paths will remain open while the work is going on.

At the end of October forty volunteer rescuers from three mountain rescue teams were called out to rescue five walkers who had gotten lost in the dark on the Pennine Way and who were suffering the early symptoms of hypothermia. Two Search and Rescue Dogs Association handlers and their dogs joined the Border Search and Rescue Unit, Northumberland National Park and North of Tyne Mountain Rescue Teams and a helicopter from RAF Boulmer in Northumberland in the search. The walkers, two fathers from Wooler in Northumberland, with their sons, two aged 19 and one 15, were eventually airlifted from Lamb Hill by the Sea King helicopter.

The problems with Sat Nav even make it to road signs. Seen on the outskirts of Helmsley.



Descending down into Riccal Dale on the last Sunday of the month. This walk will feature in the forthcoming book, 'Walking around Helmsley and Ryedale', which will be released early in 2014.



Earlier this year a group of interested parties got together and with the support of Berwick Town Council started to plan a new four-day walking festival for 2014. The walks programme for the festival is now in place, the website – www.berwickwalking.co.uk – is now active and the marketing is starting to be in place for the event. Jon Monks, from Shepherds Walks, which is helping to run the event, said: “The Berwick-upon-Tweed Walking Festival has been very well received so far with bookings starting to come in from all over the country”. As it is the first year, the organising group has put a varied programme together so partners can see what the demand is like. The programme includes everything from a 45-minute Nordic walking taster session on the beach at Spittal right through to a 15-mile linear walk along the coast from St Abbs to Berwick. Contact 01669 621044 to have a walks programme posted out.

The North York Moors National Park visitor centres at Sutton Bank and Danby will change to their winter opening hours as from November 1. The new winter times are: November and December, daily, until 1 January: 10.30am – 4pm. Closed Christmas Eve and Christmas Day.

For the first time during winter 2013-14, Northumberland National Park's visitor information point in Rothbury is to open every day instead of only at weekends. The new hours will help people staying out of season who need help with information, activities and directions. The visitor information point, situated at the National Park offices at Church House by Rothbury Market Cross, is now run in partnership with Shepherds Walks, the walking service and product company.

A bid to erect a fence to keep sheep off a road in a protected area has been approved, despite opposition from the Open Spaces Society. The Graziers' Association of Allendale Stinted Pasture in Northumberland sought to be allowed to erect two miles of fence to keep animals off a road within the North Pennines Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. However, the Open Spaces Society objected to the application claiming the fence would be an eyesore and would block access to common land. Now, however, a government planning inspector has sided with the association. The application for the fence included seven points of access to the common land and was

And what do you do when the route goes between a group of the locals ?

Answer - go carefully round the side.



sought in order to prevent sheep wandering onto the Allendale to Carrshield road. In the past sheep have been hit by cars and either killed outright or left for dead a situation that also poses a safety risk to drivers. The association's application, part of a Higher Level Stewardship Scheme and both Natural England and the landowner, the Viscount Allendale, raised no objections. However, the society, a statutory consultee on such applications, objected claiming the fence would be visually intrusive within the AONB, and that it would prove a physical and psychological barrier to the common land despite the presence of the access points. The society called for reduction in speed limit to tackle the problem of sheep being hit by cars. However, government planning inspector Richard Holland has now backed the association, allowing the fence to be erected.

Although slightly outside of the North Pennines Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, an application to build a 46 metre high wind turbine near Eggleston in Teesdale has raised objections from the AONB Partnership. If approved the turbine will be more than twice the height of the Angel of the North and according to the Partnership and other protestors, will have a significant effect on the landscape both within and outside the boundaries of the AONB.

Representatives from the mountain rescue teams from England and Wales will be in Parliament all this week to explain to MPs the importance of proper funding for the service.

Mountain Rescue England and Wales head of fundraising Mike France said: "Last year, volunteer rescuers gave 13,400 hours to the search for April Jones and that's about 1,075 days of searchers' unpaid absence from their work and families. Those same people are available 24/7 throughout the year for local callouts and they have to train for all these different situations and needs so it seems crazy that they also have to find time for fundraising just to keep their teams going. There is a huge discrepancy between the financial support given by government to Scottish rescuers – about £16,480 per team – and the much more limited funding to English teams of just £2,246 per team. Welsh teams receive a small amount extra after recent decisions in the Welsh Assembly but we're campaigning in Westminster for MPs to recognise the needs in both England and Wales. If government could guarantee a level of funding from the public purse closer to the Scottish figure, we'd be able to underwrite investments in vehicles and essential kit and subsidise essential training and insurance. We want to be able to ensure that our 3,600 or so volunteer rescuers across England and Wales can focus their time and resources on getting the job done rather than having to worry about fundraising."

The organisation is staging an exhibition in the Upper Waiting Hall in the Palace of Westminster and Penrith Conservative MP Rory Stewart will also host a reception for team representatives. MREW chairman David Allen said: "We're keen to show our representatives in government just how many search and rescue situations involve our volunteer members. We've been involved in rescues from ravines, rivers and mineshafts and even searches across golf courses and in town-centre high streets. We get involved in supporting the ambulance service in bad weather, especially on roads affected by snow and ice, in searches for vulnerable adults and children and in traumatic situations such as the recovery of suicide and accident victims. It's certainly not all about mountains and outdoor sports. We get great support from the MPs local to our rescue teams and representing the key areas for our more obvious work such as north Wales and the Lake District, and we're hoping to extend this knowledge and support throughout Parliament this week."

MREW ran a long campaign to have teams exempted from VAT, and the coalition Government responded by announcing a £200,000 grant to be shared by all UK mountain and cave rescue teams. Scottish teams, which between them benefit from an additional £300,000 boost from the Holyrood Government, were included in the £200,000 Westminster grant.

**NEW PUBLICATION
AVAILABLE AS FROM 10 NOVEMBER.**

THE NORTH WEST WAY

A 13 day walk from Preston to Carlisle

By Steve Garrill

The upland areas of the North of England are a joy to walk. Using a combination of recognised long distance paths the author traces a route from Preston to Carlisle linking the two rail stations and along the way passing through the most scenic and inspiring sections of these walks.

Here you can walk through the beauty of the Ribble Valley, through the rugged dales of Yorkshire to the thundering waterfalls of Teesdale and the sheer awe of encountering High Cup before then experiencing the solitary majesty of Cross Fell and the High Pennines. In it's final stages the walk follows the sylvan splendour of the Tyne Valley before tramping in the footsteps of the Roman Legionnaires along Hadrian's Wall towards Carlisle. This is a walk that quite simply contains the best of English walking.



Photos. A distant Pen-y-Ghent and, inset, the South Tyne Trail.

The High Seat Ridge.

For this issue of WNE we are having a look at a range of hills at the far edge of the region. Go far up Swaledale, beyond Keld, as far up as you can get, even beyond the birthplace of the Swale itself and you will find a range of hills that do not see too many visitors. At least not from the Swaledale side.

The Swale itself is born from the confluence of the two streams, the Birkdale Beck and Great Sleddale Beck and this happens right underneath the main spine of the Pennines. The High Seat ridge acts as both the backdrop and the gathering ground for the small streams and water courses that give birth to these two becks. The ridge lies slap bang on the Pennine watershed, on the one side is the Eden valley and the west of the country while on the other is the embryonic Swaledale and the east.

Unlike the other hills in Swaledale that flank the dale and run west to east to follow the flow of the river, this ridgeline forms part of the spine of the Pennines and runs north to south, effectively being the stopper at the end of the valley. The B6270 road rises up from a distant Keld on it's way to Kirkby Stephen to cross the col between the High Seat ridge and the ridge that forms the Nine Standards range and at this top end, the valley is little wider than the road.

From the Swaledale side the ridge is accessed from the B6270 road but the walk in from this side is hard and rough. Peat hags and heather bashing abound but again if your walking is about the high places then you will be used to encountering this type of terrain. By comparison, the ridge itself is far easier walking, for the most part paths and a quad bike track provide an easy route.

There are a number of high points along the ridge with the tallest, High Seat, being the summit included in the list of HEWITTS. The other points, Hugh Seat, Gregory Chapel and



High Seat from Gregory Chapel and, inset, the peat hags along the ridgeline.



High Pike although being higher than the necessary two thousand feet, don't have the required drop between their tops to meet the requirements of the list. Being a ridge this walk provides the opportunity for some high level walking and from Hugh Seat to High Pike is three miles of continuous walking above the magic two thousand foot mark.

This is a walk for a day with good visibility. As befitting any walk on the watershed of the Pennines the views over the surrounding hills and valleys are superb, the ridgeline of High Seat certainly makes an exceptionally good viewing platform. High peaks all surround you, from the Cross Fell massif in the far Northern Pennines, to the mountains of eastern Lakeland and then the closer hills of Wild Boar Fell, the Howgills range and the other big tops of the Dales, Pen-y-Gent and Whernside. If there is a walk in Swaledale that makes you feel as if you are walking amongst mountains then this is the one.

This is a wild walk and feels like it. Despite the proximity of the B6270 and the fact that it is visible from most of the route there is sufficient distance both horizontal and vertical to make you feel very distant from it. This is the top end of Swaledale, as far up as you can go, the nearest habitation is at least two miles away even from the start of the walk. Be prepared to feel isolated in these upper reaches of the valley and in this crowded world enjoy that rare moment.

November's Special Offer.

After reading about the High Seat Ridge walk why not try it yourself ?

As an inducement to get out on this under-walked ridgeline, for the month of November we are offering the book that contains this walk, 'Walking the Hills of Upper Swaledale' at the reduced price of £4.99. A saving of £5.00 - over 50% off !

And for those who would rather buy the download, then that has been reduced down to £2.99 as well.

Alternatively, if you are a real lover of Swaledale, and what is not to love about this rugged little valley, then why not try our Swaledale Bundle. All three of our publications set in Swaledale, 'Walking the Hills of Swaledale', 'Walks around Gunnerside', and 'Walks around Reeth and Upper Swaledale' at a special three for two offer. £19.98 buys you three of the best walking guides available to this special part of the Yorkshire Dales National Park.

See our website at www.trailguides.co.uk for more details.



Looking down onto the Eden valley from High Pike.

PUBLICATION LIST 01.11.2013

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.
Walks in Hadrian's Wall Country. **New publication.**

North Yorkshire

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

New publications on the way

The North West Way.
Walking in Teesdale.
Walking in Weardale 2.
Walking around Darlington and the Tees Valley.
Walking around Helmsley and Ryedale.

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