

Walking North East

SEPTEMBER 2013



Cover photo.

Not too far away from the tourist honey-pot of Helmsley lies Beck Dale. Cutting into the North York Moors this quiet little valley provides a sense of wilderness while still knowing that you are only a mile or two away from a bustling little market town. This photo was taken on Sunday and not long after taking it, we spent 10/15 minutes watching six large hawks circling above the trees. It was only when we decided that they were looking for food that we made the point of stopping standing still and moved off !!

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

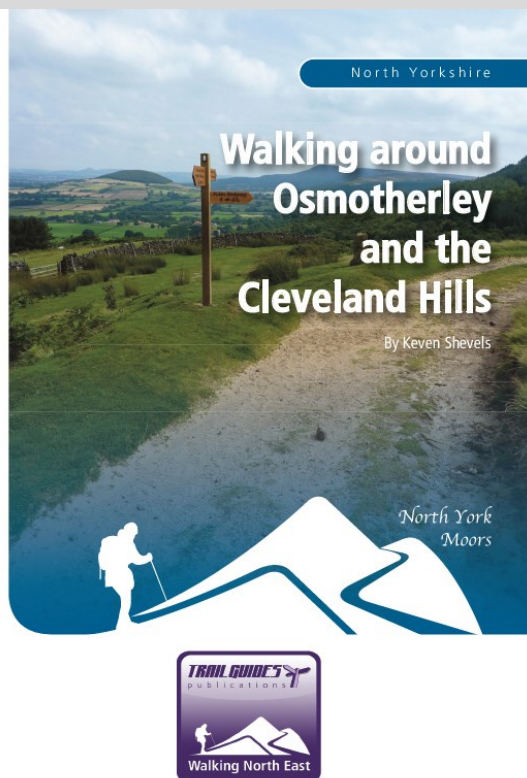
NEW PUBLICATION

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.





The first Sunday of the month involved a walk down Sleil Gill in Arkengarthdale, the most northerly of the Yorkshire Dales.

The photo shows the extensive old lead workings which cover the valley floor and both sides of the valley. The walk will feature in a forthcoming book 'Walking in Arkengarthdale' which will be available early next year.

Walking News :

An on-line petition has been opened to urge the Government to repay the VAT paid by mountain rescue teams on purchases of equipment. As we know the UK's mountain rescue teams are volunteer-based and raise their own funds to meet both equipment and running costs and the issue of using some of their funds to pay VAT has been a matter for debate for years. By contrast, the Royal National Lifeboat Institution, which is run on similar volunteer lines to mountain rescue teams, is exempt from paying VAT and the aim is to achieve the same status for mountain rescue. The petition requires 100,000 signatures to trigger possible debate by Parliament and all outdoor enthusiasts are being encouraged to sign it. The petition can be found on the [Government website](#).

The proposed £1.3 million suspension bridge to cross the River Tees close to Barnard Castle is being held up due to legal problems. The planning application for the 265 metre footbridge was intended to be submitted last year but legal officers at Durham County Council are still working to resolve several issues. It is thought that these include problems on land ownership as the county council does not own the land where the bridge would start and end and this may mean moving the bridge a small distance away from the old railway abutments that it was originally going to use.

The North Pennines Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) Partnership has produced a draft management plan for the next five years and one of the proposals included is a measure to extend it's boundaries to include more of Teesdale. At the moment the AONB covers most of the upper dale from Middleton-in-Teesdale and extends to Baldersdale and near Bowes. The proposal will re-designate land around Barningham Moor and bring it within the AONB. AONBs are areas which have statutory protection because of their beauty and as such are protected against development that could affect the landscape such as large-scale wind turbine plans. However, this change would only happen if Natural England bring about a national programme of boundary review plus a local consultation would also have to take place within the affected area.

The National Trust has rated a walk along the Northumberland coast as one of the best in the country. The Trust has compiled a list of trails that can only be accessed by foot and the spectacular walk from Craster to Dunstanburgh Castle and Low Newton has been rated in the top ten. The route being chosen for it's views of the coastline and the ruins of Dunstanburgh Castle.

Research has shown that over a quarter of the people in the North East rarely go for walks and when they do venture on outings 21% never go further than 500 metres from their car. Yet despite this, 72% of people in the region describe a feeling of euphoria on reaching the summit of a walk or a viewpoint.

Local MP, Grahame Morris representing Easington, has signed an Early Day Motion calling on the Government to bring forward it's proposals for the completion of the England Coastal Path. First proposed by the then Labour Government in 2009, the England Coastal Path was part of the Marine and Coastal Access Act which received widespread support from both the public and political parties who saw that it would provide a welcome boost to tourism around the English coastline . Originally due for completion in 2019, Mr Morris says that the Government has only so far delivered 20 miles of path with indications that the Government has quiet-

Well as the forecasters predicted a right miserable day for the third Sunday of the month there was no walk that weekend. Therefore, a cover photo from our archives.

Walking up How Hush in Swaledale as featured in our book 'Walks around Reeth and Upper Swaledale' and available from our website at www.trailguides.co.uk

As you walk up this narrow, steep-sided hush imagine what it was like two hundred years ago. The stones and rocks beneath your feet are wet and glistening from the torrent of water that has been released from the dam high on the moor above you and which has cut it's way down through the hush. As you make your way through the left-over pools of water and try to keep your footing on the loose rocks, the pick and other tools that you carry form a heavy weight on your back and shoulders. Then, along with your workmates, you reach the work face. Six to eight hours of hard, manual labour now follow, heaving pick and shovel against the rock to bring out the ore. The noise, the dirt, the dust and the smell, the working conditions being only marginally better than being down a mine itself. But working in a mine, to an extent, protected you from the elements, the workers on the open cast as we would call it today, worked throughout the year in all conditions. In winter when the water froze in the leats and couldn't be directed down the hush and summer when the heat enveloped the workings in dust and the enclosed space made the air stifling, no matter the conditions you and your mates worked or your families went hungry. Water power is credited with creating these scars on the land-scape which undoubtedly they are but in reality even though water was a vital factor, the major part of all these deep gashes was created by the hard physical graft of the human arm and back.



ly abandoned the project. Next year the coast from Hartlepool to Sunderland will become one of the few parts of the English coast to get its portion of the Coastal Path.

Walkers taking part in the Three Peaks Challenge in the Yorkshire Dales are giving their approval to a revised section of the route. The new section was opened in November last year and provides an alternative path from Pen-y-Ghent to Ribbleshead Hill that avoids the badly-eroded Horton Moor and Black Dubb Moss area and goes instead over Whitber Hill and Sell Gill. The Whitber route has the advantages over Black Dubb of being far drier, easier to navigate, and, unlike the old route, there are no stiles to cause bottlenecks at busy times. Now figures are showing that 86 per cent of people on the Three Peaks Challenge this year used the Whitber route compared with 92 per cent using Black Dubb in 2011.

A £19,000 community wood and path at Winston in Teesdale has been officially opened. Winston Community Wood was started more than a decade ago when villagers celebrating the opening of the Millennium Green in 2000, began planting saplings in a fenced-off area. As the trees, which include oak, sweet chestnut and beech, have begun to reach maturity, the Millennium Green Committee applied for funding to make the area more accessible. This work included the creation of a path around both the green and wood, the path begins at the church and then winds down alongside the green before going around the wood to join the river where it meets up with the Teesdale Way. On a more artistic bent, a sculpture based on Anglo-Saxon images taken from the church has been placed at the entrance to the path while the artist, Ewan Allinson, has also created a 'hermit's cell' at the entrance to the community wood.

Plans to open up two old railway bridges in Teesdale seem unlikely to go ahead, for the moment. The purpose of the £100,000 plan, put forward by The Heart of Teesdale Landscape Partnership, was to reunite the hamlet of Barford on the south side of the river with Gainford on the north but it would also provide a number of circular routes for walkers. Residents of the hamlet have been cut-off from Gainford, their nearest village, for four years, ever since Barforth Bridge was closed by Durham County Council on safety grounds. The bridge linked Barforth to Gainford by a five minute walk, now the journey requires an eight mile drive along a farm track which, Barforth residents say, becomes difficult to travel in poor weather.

The Three Peaks Challenge attracts around 100,000 walkers each year and now the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority is trying to assess how much they benefit the local economy. Many of the walkers visit the area just for the day to tackle one or more of the Peaks while others may spend several days in the area but up to now there has been no attempt to accurately assess the value of the Peaks to accommodation providers, food outlets and other tourism-related businesses. To help provide this information, the National Park Authority has launched an on-line survey and are hoping that everyone who has gone up one, two or three of them either individually or as part of the Three Peaks Challenge will complete the survey and enable them to find out how much they mean to the local economy. Details of the survey and information about the Three Peaks Project can be found on the National Park Authority website at www.yorkshiredales.org.uk/threeppeaks.

Walkers wanting to visit the Three Peaks in the Yorkshire Dales National Park can now download a new smart phone app. The app has been developed by the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority and contains information to plan a trip as well as 1:50,000 OS maps of the Three Peaks Challenge and alternative routes for each peak. The inbuilt GPS will also show the walkers' progress along their chosen route on an OS Map. In addition, the app is packed with geolocated places of interest that range from geological and archaeological sites through to nature reserves with stunning 360° panoramas from the summits and an augmented reality 'toposcope' showing the names of the hills surrounding each of the three peaks. The app is only currently available for use with iPhones, although an Android version will be appearing soon. The app costs £1.99 and all money from the sales will be spent on maintaining the rights of way network as part of the Three Peaks Project. The Three Peaks Yorkshire app can be downloaded from www.yorkshiredales.org.uk/y3peaksapp and is available from iTunes.

Just goes to show how we can all make a mistake when determining a route for a walk. On the third Sunday of the month, the walk was planned to be from Helmsley on the edge of the North York Moors, heading south via the Ebor Way into the Howardian Hills and its Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty before looping back to Helmsley.

The cover picture shows a small wood as you head down towards the River Rye which was one of the scenic parts of the route. And there was not too many of them.

A bad navigational error, we failed to spot a six-foot marker post that was hidden in the middle of an over-grown hedge, meant that we did an unnecessary three-mile out and back diversion and the planned walk became more of a six and a half hour trek. But it wasn't just the extra mileage. The walk itself was too long and for very long stretches consisted of nothing more than walking along field edges. Not exactly exhilarating, in fact downright boring. In short it was a walk that I would struggle to recommend anybody to try, so hasten to add that it wouldn't be appearing in any of our books.

Some you win and some you lose. Hopefully, next week's walk will provide more stimulation.

Anybody else have a walk that didn't turn out as promising as the map suggested ??



A group of young trees growing at an estate in Kent could provide clues to the types of trees that should be planted for the predicted warmer future in Britain. The saplings are being grown by the Forestry Commission's Forest Research agency on the Woodland Trust's Hucking Estate, near Maidstone. Traditional advice to woodland owners has always been to plant trees from local sources using seeds gathered in the local area as after thousands of years of natural selection, local trees are best adapted to local conditions. However, now it is being found that trees which grow in warmer regions might be better adapted to our likely future climate, and the potential benefits of drawing from a broader genetic stock than the local area can provide are also being increasingly recognised. Planting trees from a wider range of UK sources might help and now research is under way to consider the implications of planting species which are native to the UK but sourced from elsewhere in Europe. To put this to the test, scientists from Forest Research have planted more than 3700 saplings including oak, ash, sweet chestnut and wild cherry on the estate. As well as from local sources, the saplings came from locations in northern France and central Italy. This is because these areas of Europe currently have the sorts of climates which, with the effects of climate change, are predicted for Kent in 2050 and 2080. The trees, which were first checked to be free of pests and diseases, were planted in 2011, and the trials are expected to continue for at least 10 years. Scientists are studying the survival and growth rates of each of the trees and are also noting their growth periods and the times at which buds develop in spring, life-cycle factors which are greatly influenced by climatic conditions. Previous studies by Forest Research have shown that trees are adapted to their local conditions. For example, acorns from Italian oaks germinate several weeks earlier than their English counterparts, even when planted in the same conditions as found in England. Although this means that Italian seedlings might be affected by the late frosts which can occur in Britain, it may also mean that they may benefit from an extended growing period. Choosing the best planting stock to get the balance right in the future will be critical.

Durham County Council have released their new guide to walks across County Durham. Titled 'County Durham' the guide includes a six-month programme of guided walks and countryside events for the period between October and March 2014. Copies of the guide can be obtained from Durham County Council on 03000-264579 or by downloading it at www.durham.gov.uk/countryside.

Wildlife volunteers say they have found new information which indicates that the decline in the number of red squirrels within the region may be halting. A survey of 300 sites by the group Red Squirrels Northern England that was held in the spring, found that reds were spotted in seven per cent more sites than 12 months ago, while greys were seen at 18 per cent fewer sites. Volunteers from the group say that the preliminary results strongly suggest that the population of red squirrels in the region may be finally be stabilising after over 140 years of decline.

Water voles are struggling to survive in the North-East, with numbers down by more than a fifth. Research by Durham Wildlife Trust is showing the overall decline in this small mammal despite encouraging signs from a number of waterways in the region. The trust says that while there are some strongholds where water voles continue to thrive, the species remains vulnerable to further decline and extinctions. The problem is blamed on long-term habitat loss, mink predation and extreme weather events which includes last year's spring drought. The Trust is involved in a number of projects to establish where populations remain and are looking at what needs to be done to help these populations re-connect and expand across larger areas. The Trust's surveyors look for droppings, feeding stations and burrows in order to detect their presence along water courses and these surveys show reasonably healthy populations in South Tyneside and Weardale that buck the national trend, with the River Don in South Tyneside supporting one of the best urban water vole populations in the North-East. The Trust is now appealing for help to record up to date information on water vole distribution, information on sightings can be made on 0191 5843112.

Plans have been submitted for two 35m tall wind turbines between Norham and Duddo in North Northumberland. The turbines would be located some 500m from the hamlet of Felkington and 1.6km from the Duddo Stone Circle, an ancient scheduled monument.

Geoff Holland is one of the most respected writers on the Cheviot Hills and is a regular contributor of walking routes to a number of national walking magazines. Here at Trailguides we can offer four books written by Geoff on his beloved Cheviots; 'The Cheviot Hills', 'Walks from Wooler', 'The Hills of Upper Coquetdale', and 'Walks on the Wild Side: The Cheviot Hills'.

Now, for the month of October only, we can offer all four books for the price of three. Instead of paying the cover price of £36.98 you only pay £28.48. A saving of £8.50.

If you have never walked in the Cheviots then you owe it to yourself to sample the rugged splendour of these quiet hills and you wouldn't find a better guide to them than one of Geoff's books.

**MONTHLY
SPECIAL OFFER**

A plea has been made to save part of the Eston Hills "for the people" after 214 acres of the eastern part of the hills was put up for sale. The privately owned land, which has a guide price of £425,000, is at Lazenby Bank and was formerly part of the Wilton Castle Estate and is a Site of Nature Conservation Interest. It was an ICI property from 1945 until it was sold to private owners in the 1990s and has been put on the market as a whole, or in eight separate lots. Now a "Save The Eston Hills" Facebook page has been set-up and has already attracted more than 2,500 members. A message on the page states: "This is an absolute jewel in Teesside's crown and a fantastic opportunity to create a publicly owned heritage and nature park. Only then can this much-loved natural and historic amenity be truly safeguarded and celebrated for generations to come." The group has contacted Redcar and Cleveland Council asking if the council has any interest in acquiring the site. If that reply is negative or will not happen in the near future then the group is proposing to set themselves up as a charity and begin a massive online fundraising drive to buy the site itself. Lazenby Bank is described as having "a rich heritage, having previously been an area that was utilised for iron stone mining, with Lot 8, the Grade II-Listed Lovell Drift Fan House, a remnant of the Cleveland ironstone mines. Other historical features of this part of the Eston Hills include the remains of Bronze Age burial mounds and an Iron Age hill fort, together with a 19th century monument located at Eston Beacon. Flora-wise Lazenby Bank includes mixed broadleaves and conifers of varying ages, part of which is classified as Ancient Semi-Natural Woodland.

A new poem from Geoff Holland reflecting a winter walk in The Cheviots.

DECEMBER DAY

Drab December day,
Wooler sleepwalks through half-lit dawn.
Alone in north Northumberland,
silent beside giggling burn & primed.
The easy track leads on.
Reastead renamed & bullocks eyeing with suspicion.
Hart Heugh, stone-strewn & ancient,
drifts in & out of sight.
Pheasants shriek at Switcherdown,
a single tree & tumbled stones.
Little remains, only a witches ghost.
Then Cold Law, head in the clouds,
feet in the bare winter valley,
a reluctant, retiring host.
A red grouse warns, 'go-back, back, back',
but up past boundary stone to summit cairn,
drenched to its own skin, sullen.
Carling Crag, shrouded & mysterious
dissolves once seen
& then to Carey Burn
bristling, scurrying downstream. Pell-mell.
The linn, grey, flood-washed rock,
white beard reminding me
it is Christmas time. But, first,
the Hellpath, tree-lined & saturated,
strength-sapping as it angles skywards.
The sting in the long tail home.

GEOFF HOLLAND

Four osprey chicks were hatched this year at Kielder Water and Forest Park. This being the highest number that have survived at the Park during any twelve month period since their return to the region in 2009 after an absence of 200 years. Now the fledglings, along with their parents, are heading south to winter in West Africa where they will arrive in about a month's time.



The walk on the last Sunday of the month featured the Red House Beck near Heighington in County Durham. This walk will appear in a forthcoming book, 'Walking around Darlington and the Tees Valley', which will contain a number of shorter walks close to the urban area of Darlington and which are designed to encourage beginners into walking.

PRODUCT NEWS

Being North Easterners, we are always pleased to support fellow organisations from our region particularly if they relate to the outdoor scene. After all, if you are going to spend money then spend it locally rather than with one of these large multi-national corporations. To this end our friends at H18 have brought out a new piece of kit that looks extremely useful.

Hangar 18 is dedicated to bringing the best performance for ultra light products to the extreme enthusiast. It's designed by mountain marathon runners and lightweight adventurers.

The H18 down-insulated vest is the most versatile piece of outdoor kit you'll ever buy, pack it any time of year, winter through to summer. It provides the extra insulation on winter bivvies or over- night camps and take it on summer trips as your lightweight insulation. Pull it out of your rucksack as needed, the down vest is unbelievably light and packs down small in it's own stuff sac, so there is no excuse not to take it with you.



H18 Down Vest Features:

- Full front Zip
- 2 zippered hand warmer pockets
- Outer: 400T Nylon Ripstop, showerproof, downproof
- Construction: Stitch through for lightweight, 200gsm for medium size.
- Fill: 650 fill power, 90% New Duck Down

Stuff sack included

Hangar 18 are based in the North Pennines and offer a range of lightweight products suitable for any fell walker, check them out at www.h18orr.com



The smallest stack of logs that I've ever been asked not to play on !!

PEG POWLER'S SUDS

If you go down to the Tees today

Keep your eyes open for the whitey-brown foam building up on the surface and if you see it keep well away from the water's edge.



Peg Powler is not a nice creature. A green haired, snaggle-toothed water hag that lives below the surface of the river and preys upon the unwary, dragging them down into the depths and a watery death. For generations Teesdale folk have kept their children in check with tales of Peg and her fondness for naughty children who would suddenly disappear if they got too close to the water's edge.

Peg roams the length of the river, over the centuries taking victims from the upper reaches down to Pierce-bridge. Her presence being indicated by the whitey-brown foam on the surface of the river caused by her passage under the water and known locally as Peg Powler's Suds.

Since the building of Cow Green Reservoir and it's dam in the 1960's, Peg has been relatively quiet but she is not gone only sleeping.

As you walk along the river's edge and the foam rises then be careful. If you suddenly feel a hand around your ankle and you then look down into the face of an old hag with long, unkempt green hair billowing across the water then you've met Peg. Struggle as much as you like, her grip is like iron and she'll slowly drag you under to your doom.

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.

PUBLICATION LIST 01.10.2013

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

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

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