



Get away for... **THE WEEKEND!**

From fells and falls to the Gates Of Hell – enjoy exploring the delightful Yorkshire Dales

WORDS & PHOTOGRAPHY: Carol Kubicki

Walking on the moorland above the wonderful Ribbleshead Viaduct, I could hear the desolate call of the curlews overhead. Curlews accompany many of our walks and, as their numbers decline, I'm pleased to hear they are hanging on in this corner of the Yorkshire Dales.

Some believe the curlew's mournful song is a bad omen and folklore and writers from Wordsworth to *Iron Maiden* warn us about hearing the seven whistlers. The species vary, but the seven whistling birds all share a similar doleful call and curlews, swifts and plovers are commonly mentioned. Hearing seven of these birds together can foretell bad weather, death or even the apocalypse. I search the hillside but, fortunately, can't count more than two curlews.

At Ribbleshead itself you won't hear the curlews over the bustle of people and traffic.

It was a sunny day and walkers were in the middle of their three peaks challenge. A vintage bus arrived and people spilled out for a picnic. The mobile café and The Station Inn were doing a good trade from cyclists and bikers.

We set off through the old Ribbleshead Quarry into the tranquillity of the Ingleborough National Nature Reserve. The quarry was full of colourful wild flowers and I lingered while Anthony searched for our route on the open access land.

We eventually reached the path below the ridge of Ingleborough, walking through grassland dotted with purple thyme flowers and with views to the slopes of Wharfedale.

There are good examples of the large areas of exposed rock known as limestone pavement here. The limestone erodes into parallel rows of blocks called clints, ►

Why?... Hawes has great walking, things to do, places to eat and shopping – without needing to move your motorhome

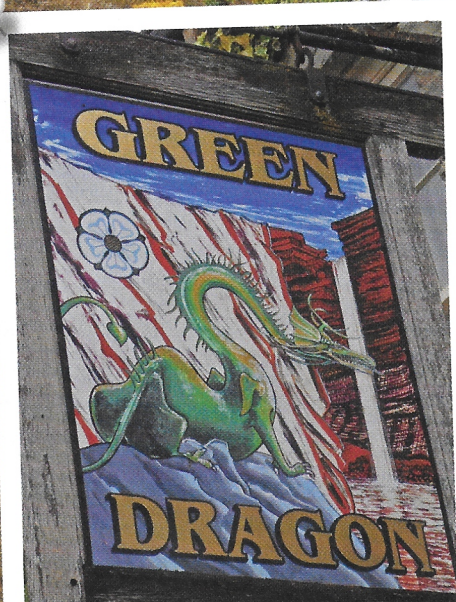


MAIN The walk by the River Ure to Hawes is idyllic

BELOW LEFT The Green Dragon is by the entrance to Hardraw Force

BELOW RIGHT A colourful vintage bus at Ribbleshead

FAR LEFT The Yorkshire Dales are a magnet for walkers



US AND OUR 'VAN



Carol Kubicki...

and husband, Anthony, use their camper to pursue their hobbies of walking and cycling while exploring the historical and natural environments



2015 Devon Tempest on a Renault Master. At 5.5m we think it's enormous and, with a washroom, also luxurious

separated by grykes where the glossy leaves of hart's-tongue ferns grow.

If I miscounted and there were seven whistlers foretelling disaster, then Great Douk Cave must be the gates of hell.

We climbed the stile and followed the steps into the wooded sunken hollow that is typical of limestone country and known as a shake hole.

About halfway in this depression we both shivered as we crossed the line from warm summer air to a hellish chill. In this shadowy green hollow we found a large stone plugging a cave entrance from which a spring emerges before almost immediately disappearing mysteriously underground. Caving isn't for me and we climbed back out to the reassuring sunshine for a picnic overlooking more limestone pavement.

We returned to Ribbleshead along the slopes of Wharfedale, passing through the tiny hamlet of Chapel-le-Dale where (not surprisingly) a pretty chapel nestles in the valley. Climbing through the wood I was startled by a fantastical statue with big eyes and flaying arms, surely some malicious woodland spirit.

This twentieth century sculpture by Charles I'Anson was vandalised in the 1980s and found below 30ft of water in the nearby Hurtle Pot. The sculpture's plaque tells

passing walkers that divers recovered the statue and adds a warning, 'Time will tell if the spirit of the 'Boggard' of Hurtle Pot is now enshrined in the statue'.


Back on open hillside we had views to the distinctive summit of Ingleborough. Ribbleshead Viaduct returned to view and a tiny two-carriage train travelled over it; unfortunately, we weren't here on a steam train day. We walked underneath the magnificent high arches of the viaduct back to the bustle of Ribbleshead.

We were staying in the lovely market town of Hawes, home to Wensleydale cheese and in the Yorkshire Dales National Park. Sitting at the end of the lovely Wensleydale, Hawes is embraced by hills that are cut by steep climbs such as Buttertubs Pass and Fleet Moss. The Hawes Caravan and Motorhome Club site is just a 10-minute walk from the town, making it a perfect place to stay if you want shops, pubs and restaurants, attractions and public transport nearby. Our Harvey map of Hawes illustrates eight walks from the town and, with a couple of days, we had no shortage of things to do.


Light rain the next morning saw us walking into Hawes and, after browsing the shops, we visited the Wensleydale Creamery. We have taken the interesting cheese-

INFORMATION


It's all about the cheese

 wensleydale.co.uk

Walks and more

 yorkshiredales.org.uk


If you've got the time...

 dalescountryside-museum.org.uk

A hidden gem

 hardrawforce.com

Check out the steam train running times

 settle-carlisle.co.uk



RIGHT Wensleydale Creamery Visitor Centre Cheese Experience in Gayle, Hawes*

Must do... Sample some delicious Wensleydale cheese

making tour before, but also love the shop and café. For a cheese lover like me the shop is heaven as samples of cheeses are free to try, including a tangy sheep's milk Wensleydale, a creamy Brie and sweet Wensleydale with fruit.



After plenty of tasting we came away with a selection of wonderful cheese and some 'posh' crackers. With lunch sorted we returned to the 'van and, by the time we had eaten, the weather was brightening up and we set off on a low-level walk around the nearby villages of Appersett and Hardraw.

Wensleydale is a gorgeous landscape in any weather. The fields, divided by dry stone walls, are dotted with sheep and picturesque traditional barns.

Climbing above Hawes on a bridleway by a restored limekiln we were surrounded by whistling curlew again, as well as lapwings and oystercatchers flying and calling through the air.

The stone walls mean there are stiles every few hundred yards and, if you struggle with stiles, this might not be the walk for you. On the dry stone walls we found

occasional colourful mosaics, part of a trail around Hawes.

It was decades since we had visited Hardraw Force, so we opted to pay to see this magnificent waterfall – the highest single-drop fall in England. Last time we came we entered through the Green Dragon Inn. Nowadays, Hardraw Force has its own entrance through a café and visitor centre.

The new owners have improved the paths and surroundings of the almost secret rocky cove where you find the fall. Best seen after rain, even in a dry summer this is a spectacular waterfall.

In my opinion the best beer my pennies can buy is Theakston Old Peculier and the Green Dragon generally stocks this dark nectar (imagine Christmas pudding in a glass). The Green Dragon's bar is thought to date back to the fourteenth century and this is a traditional and charming pub. At 5.6% ABV I can't drink too much Old Peculier, but we settled near the fire (yes, a fire in July!) with a glass each. I'm a lightweight drinker and, back at the campsite, I had no sooner sat down than I was asleep!

The fine weather returned the next day and we chose a longer walk from the ►

ESSENTIALS

HOW LONG

Three nights

WHEN

We visited in July

HOW MUCH

Fuel Average 34mpg (190 miles)	£30
Site fees	£92.40
TOTAL	£122.40



TOP TIPS

There are a lot of dry stone walls in Yorkshire and, therefore, a lot of stiles. If you find stiles difficult, check out the alternative routes

 yorkshiredales.org.uk/miles-without-stiles

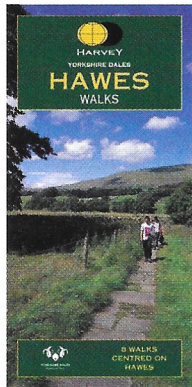
BELOW The 24 arches of the Ribblesdale Viaduct



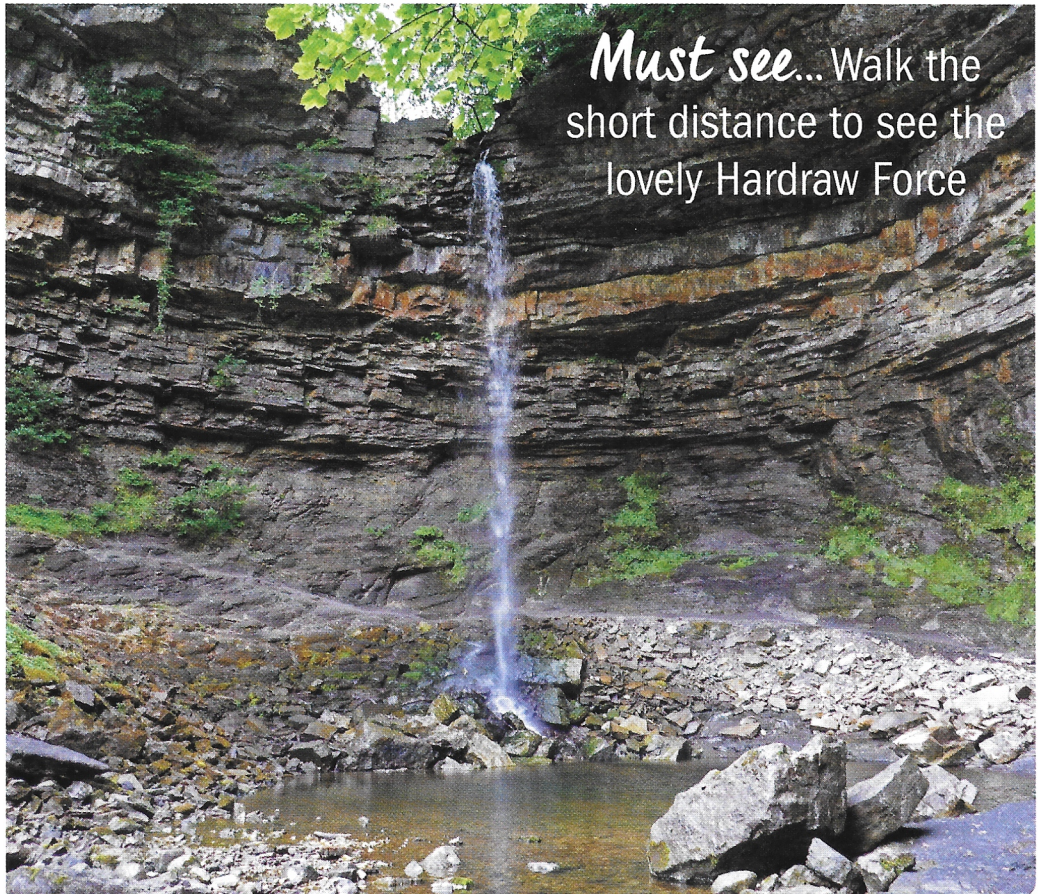
MAP

Harvey's *Yorkshire Dales Hawes Walks* map (£5) is an easy to use guide to eight walks from Hawes, 3½ to 10 miles in length, ISBN: 978-1851374205

 harveymaps.co.uk



RIGHT Hardraw Force is the highest single drop fall in England



Harvey map. Stags Fell dominates the northern skyline of this part of Wensleydale and we set off uphill to the village of Sedbusk and took the bridleway to the long escarpment of the fell.

Stags Fell was quarried in the past and we stopped to admire the tall stone cairns that now mark the mining areas. We had the fell to ourselves; rabbits darted through the grass as we walked and curlews called their doom-laden song.

We were also accompanied by another of the seven whistlers, the golden plover. These gold and black birds watched us from the skyline, their creaking-gate-like call so distinctive. I touched wood after I had counted up to five.

As we neared the road over Buttertubs Pass a model aircraft wheeled above us, expertly flown by someone far below. This steep hill was part of the Tour de France route when it came to Yorkshire and two cyclists puffed up the slope.

Although the wild garlic had finished flowering in Shaw Ghyll (or Gill) Wood, we could still smell its pungent scent as we followed the path through this attractive valley. The stream falls prettily down a series of small waterfalls among the trees.

We hoped to see red squirrels, but these were lost in the green canopy. Instead,

we were delighted to see a family of grey wagtails and a dipper.

Somehow another day's walk had bought us back to Hardraw and it would be rude not to have another glass of Old Peculier. We joined the score of other outdoor drinkers and chatted to a couple from Scotland who are regular visitors to Wensleydale. Over beers we shared favourite walks and agreed that the Dales are wonderful in any season.

In the early evening sunshine we strolled by the lovely stretch of the River Ure near the campsite enjoying views to the surrounding fells. The path follows a grassy raised dyke and I stopped to admire more handsome and sturdy Yorkshire barns and a flock of friendly hens and ducks.

The curlews were still whistling, but there didn't seem to be seven of them so I felt optimistic that all was well. We watched a common sandpiper skipping and sauntering around the stones at the river's edge before reaching Hawes and sampling the delights of the chippy.


It was time to head home. We hadn't had the chance to walk to the picturesque village of Bainbridge, follow the Roman Road and visit Aysgill Force or explore the Dales Countryside Museum. Fingers crossed that there will be a next time. www





ABOVE The Green Dragon at Hardraw dates back to the fourteenth century


THE CAMPSITE

Hawes C&MC Site, Brunt Acres Road, Hawes, North Yorkshire DL8 3PS

 01969 667338

 camc.com

 15 March – 6 January

 Two adults, pitch and electric: From £21.40