

REETH & DISTRICT GAZETTE

ISSUE NO. 355

JANUARY 2026



*Your local news magazine
for the two dales*

PRICELESS BUT DONATIONS WELCOME

Happy New Year!

I hope you have had a wonderful Christmas and feel rested and prepared for another dose of Dales winter! I know it can feel long and relentless, but I also know that there are some great activities and events planned in the Two Dales to keep everyone connected and with uplifted spirits! Thanks to everyone who managed to get stuff in to me for the very early deadline for this January issue. Do keep sending information about upcoming events so that they can be publicised as widely as possible.

From the Committee page opposite, some of you may notice that I have now permanently moved out of the dales to a village near Harrogate. I am happy to keep on editing the Gazette as I am still with you in spirit, but if anyone feels a true local is more appropriate and wants to step up please get in touch!

Jackie

Langthwaite - Arkengarthdale

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Cover photo: Angus Strachan, "I am a Yorkshire lad from Hessle near Hull. I love Swaledale! I now live in Los Angeles California. Here is a picture of me holding your esteemed publication in front of the Santa Monica Pier. It was sent to me by my sister, Vanessa Strachan, who loves the CB Inn."

As you can see Angus is holding last January's issue. I hope he has kept up with all our Gazettes over the year! Ed

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All articles or items for inclusion should be sent to the editor
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or left at Reeth Post Office.

Gazette Deadlines

The deadlines for the next two months are:

February issue: January 12th
March issue: February 9th

Please Note: We will endeavour to publish all suitable items submitted by the deadline date but this is at the sole discretion of the editor.



More Planes and Automobiles, but still no trains – maybe next time? By John Hunter

Following on from 'Those Magnificent Men' in 1969 was 'Those Daring Young Men in their Jaunty Jalopies' - the American title which cashed in on its predecessor - over here it was called simply 'Monte-Carlo or Bust' after the



famous car rally it features. Terry Thomas appears as the similarly dastardly son of the original villain (with 'servant' Eric Sykes still as downtrodden) but upping the comedy ante were Peter Cook and Dudley Moore, reigning in their more anarchic tendencies as a pair of Army 'inventors', driving a car with more gadgets than Connery's Aston Martin. The great Jack Hawkins ('The Cruel Sea') also made one of his later film appearances, his dialogue dubbed after having to have his larynx removed. Along for the 'top spot' ride this time was Tony Curtis, who also proved unpopular on set, but once again the vehicles were the real stars with a whole plethora of actual and reconstructed vintage cars featuring in some very well-choreographed race

scenes (unfortunately again marred by dodgy back projection). Ron Goodwin supplied a copycat score to 'Magnificent Men' with the added novelty of title vocals from the great Jimmy Durante. You may remember last time I asked about the film's title - the US 'jalopy' one directly referenced its predecessor, whilst 'Monte Carlo or Bust' which was used over here reflects the title song exactly. Whilst on the subject of titles, the original's FULL title was the longest ever at that time, being 'Those magnificent men in their flying machines, or how I flew from London to Paris in 2 hours and 11 minutes!' Anyway - back to the subject in hand, and it is said that the despicable Terry Thomas was the direct inspiration for 'Dick Dastardly' from 'Wacky Races' (complete with moustache twirling) - see what you think from their pictures!



Tony Curtis had already appeared in a very similar (but US financed) vintage car movie four years before 'Monte Carlo' - anyone remember its name? CLUE; it had a memorable score from the great Henry Mancini including a popular waltz song (succeeding both 'Moon River' and 'Charade') - it also had an odd central section which was essentially a remake of 'The prisoner of Zenda' - Oh, and Jack Lemon played a very Terry Thomas-like villain - the whole thing directed by the great Blake Edwards! - Answer next time.



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'Major' Wind Farm Plan near Yorkshire Dales

A wind farm featuring 20 wind turbines could be built on the edge of the Yorkshire Dales.

The 200m (656ft)-high structures would be erected near the Stang Forest, between Arkengarthdale and Teesdale, if the proposal by Fred Olsen Renewables is approved.



The developer claimed the Hope Moor Wind Farm would generate enough energy to power 81,000 homes and businesses.

It said public consultations would begin in spring 2026. This will be followed by a second stage of public consultation later in 2026 at which further feedback on the proposals will be sought before the submission of an application in 2027.

"This is a major scheme and it is important that people living in the area find out as much information as possible about what's being proposed," said Yvonne Peacock, who represents the Upper Dales on North Yorkshire Council. According to the proposals, the layout and final number of turbines would be decided following consultation with Historic England, Natural England, the Environment Agency, and local communities.

According to the Local Democracy Reporting Service, due to the size of

the scheme, the Secretary of State would need to issue a development consent order following an assessment of the plans by the Planning Inspectorate, rather than the proposal being decided by North Yorkshire Council.

The Norwegian developer, which already operates wind farms in the UK, said Hope Moor would be "sensitively designed to respect nature and the landscape, as well as the traditional land practices of the upland moors".

The project would create jobs and invest in local communities, it added.

If approved, it would be located on an area of open moorland to the south of Barnard Castle and north of Richmond which covers about 1,130 hectares (2,792 acres).

"The open topography and isolated location mean Hope Moor gifts the North of England an ideal site for carbon negative power generation," the company said.

It confirmed the scheme would be outside the boundary of the Yorkshire Dales National Park and said it was still at a very early stage of development.

Joe Willis, Local Democracy Reporting Service



The wind farm would be built near the Stang Forest if plans are approved



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The railway that never was: Richmond to Reeth

In 1846 the railway to Richmond from Darlington opened. The "railway mania" of the 1840s brought proposals to link Richmond to Hawes or Kirkby Stephen.

The plans came to nought. Again in 1868 new plans were developed and flopped. By 1878 the railway through Wensleydale reached the Midland Railway at Garsdale Head. Swaledale felt it was losing out. Quickly afterwards plans were put forward for a railway between Richmond and Reeth, with a terminus in Richmond near to Hurgill Road. These plans also failed.

The 1896 Light Rail Act offered better prospects for rural railways, for example by reducing the costs of level crossings by removing gates! It brought a new optimism to Swaledale. However it was 1912 before a final push was made to turn plans to reality.

At an Inquiry in Richmond in 1912 the case for the railway was made in terms

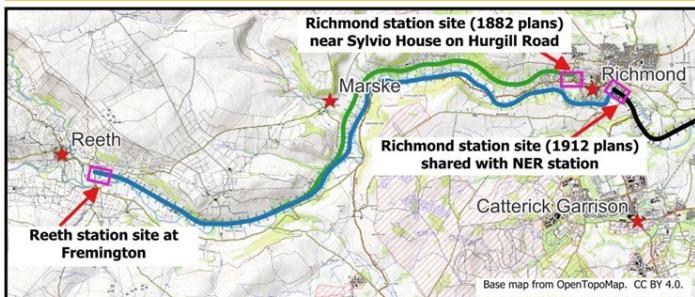
of agriculture, farming, lead, chert, and tourism. The new plans cost £40,000, and the projected receipts of £4,200 per year appeared to cover the running costs. The Treasury was persuaded to provide a grant of £20,000. The mood was buoyant.

However the promoters were having trouble in designing a connection at Richmond station. Rather than destroying what Henry VIII left of St Martin's Priory, they wisely planned to relocate the existing railway goods yards. This, and other issues, led to them asking for 50% more from Treasury.

Treasury then increased its offer to £25,000, so long as the North Riding and Reeth Councils also contributed. Reeth and the North Riding had been prepared to loan £20,000. Their calculations assumed they could save on road maintenance over the notoriously unstable Reeth-Richmond road. They were probably kidding themselves, it seems very unlikely that slightly reduced road

traffic due to the railway would have alleviated the subsidence along that road. Furthermore the North Riding was also assuming Marske, Marrick and Hudswell Parish Councils would chip in about £800 each. Given that those parish councils hardly

Map Showing historical plans for railways from Richmond to Reeth



- 1882 Richmond-Reeth railway plans
- 1912 Richmond-Reeth railway plans
- North Eastern Railway (NER) from Darlington to Richmond

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Map of proposed connection in 1912 plans at Richmond for Reeth light railway.
[Reproduced with the Permission of The National Archives.]

have that amount of money in their bank accounts today that was a heroic outlook! like the railway, the buses don't get as far as Reeth. But then we do have the Little White Bus!

The final letter making the case to Treasury was in late September 1914, two months after the start of World War One. Treasury's internal file note pinned to this letter starts with the words "This line is pretty obviously more trouble than it is worth". The country had other priorities. Ironically it was the First World War that brought the final expansion of railways locally with the branch to the new Catterick Camp in 1915.

The Darlington-Richmond railway closed in 1969, when the service was almost hourly. Today the X26 and X27 buses ply the route every half an hour for most of the day. But of course, just

For a more complete version of this story see www.marskeinswaledale.com



Could a train like this have run between Richmond and Reeth? A 1903 petrol-electric railcar designed for the North East Railway's minor routes. Now at the Embsay and Bolton Abbey Railway.

Fremington Village Hall (Formerly Fremington Sunday School)



Thank you to all those who attended the Fremington Village Hall open event in June. We had some interesting discussions about the history of the building, including a display of old plans and documents from the County Archive.

The oldest record we had was a deed of sale in 1825 between Robert Deacon

(who seems to have been the farmer who owned the land) and the then vicar, Henry Burdett Worthington and four parishioners who had put up the money to buy the land and the building "lately erected" for use as a Sunday School. The writing isn't easy to read, but the parishioners seem to have been Matthew Whitlock of Cogden Hall, George Atkinson of Hagg Cottage, John Barker of Healaugh, all of whom were said to be "gentlemen", and Richard MacBollan of Reeth who was said to be a grocer and druggist.

Unfortunately we did not have any Sunday School records - they appear to have been lost in the mists of time. But we do know that in the 19th Century there were an astonishing number of children living in the dale. In 1878 for example there were no less than 66 children at the Church of England School in Fremington itself and 898 at the Friends School in Reeth.



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We did have documents that showed that the Sunday School has long been used for other events, notably a meeting in 1895 to discuss the proposed railway from Richmond to Reeth. Mr Whitlock of Cogden Hall gallantly offered to allow the line over his land (in return for shares in the company). Others at the meeting also seemed to have been strongly in favour but worried about the attitude of residents of Richmond, as the proposed line would cut through part of the town.

Most interesting of all was information brought to the event by Myra Horseman (nee Allinson) who some readers may know. She recalled the hall being used after the war as a canteen for the children at Fremington School. She also shared with us the picture, left, of a meeting in the hall in 1954. The ladies are making items to raise funds for the Church. With Myra's help we think we know many of the names. From back left to front right they are: Harry Blenkiron, Mrs Hunt, Doris Barningham, Elsie Pedley, Christine Croft, Mrs Elsie Thompson, Myra Allinson herself, Mrs Blenkiron, Mrs Rhoda Alice Barningham, Mrs Clark (the Vicar's wife), Mrs Burton, Mrs Charlotte Allinson and Mrs Jean Attwood. The two we can't identify are on the left: one facing away from the camera and one side on.

If you know who they are let us know. And if you have memories of the hall, we'd love to hear from you. Needless to say, the hall has been updated a bit since the picture was taken and is still available for community events 200 years on.

Mike Evershed
(mikeatnutmeg@gmail.com)

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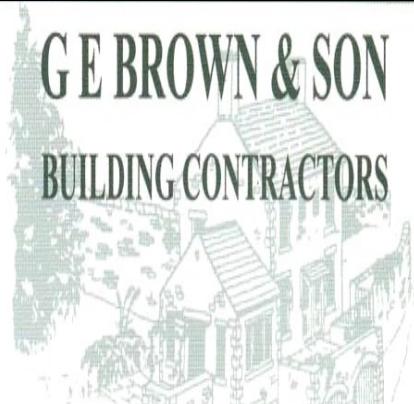
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January Update

Happy New Year! The festive period is behind us and while our thoughts are already looking well ahead into 2026 it's also an opportunity to look back and reflect on the hard work and dedication given by our volunteers, participants and supporters - we couldn't do it without you! Here are just a few of the memories created during the year.

January - Our sound and lighting team started the year supporting Hawes Amateur Operatic Society with their production of Babes in the Wood. Always a great community production directed by Amy Cockett. Robinson Crusoe is their 2026 production which takes place from Wednesday 28th to Saturday 31st which includes a matinee and evening performance.

March - The Colin Bailey Band gave their time to help raise funds for BlueBoxt and The Friends of Marrick Priory with a concert featuring popular hits from across the decades in Reeth Memorial Hall. Colin will be back in March 2026 (date TBC) with Reeth resident Gail Barlow presenting a programme entitled "Mediterranean Medley".

May - VE80 Anniversary Commemorative Concert. Generations came together from across

Wensleydale and Swaledale in a concert of thanks, hope, peace and light, marking 80 years since Victory in Europe. Participants represented BlueBoxt's Play, Record, Perform project and Light My Choir!, St. Matthew's Church, Leyburn Band, The Yoredale Strummers, The Leyburn Branch of the Royal British Legion, The Wensleydale School Combined Cadet Force, The 1st Wensleydale Scout Group and children from Leyburn, Middleham and Spennithorne, Bainbridge, Askrigg and West Burton Primary Schools. A truly moving and memorable occasion reflecting, remembering and celebrating the bravery and sacrifice of loved ones past and present who are dedicated to resolving conflict around the world.



Top: Light My Choir!

Bottom: Wensleydale Scout Group teaching the audience campfire songs. Images © Colin Fieldgate, Wensleydale Camera Club

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June - Wensleydale Community Arts Festival featured another varied mix of spoken word, poetry, art, photography and music. There were many highlights including live theatre in Askrigg and a fund-raising Fashion Show which raised over £800 at West Burton. Another stand out event was the Dales Variety Show featuring performers for Dales Dance and BlueBoxt. The Methodist Hall was bursting with proud family and friends celebrating the achievements of the young performers taking part in ballet, tap and contemporary dance, musical theatre, classical, jazz and popular music activities across the two dales.

We also launched our Feasibility Study - A creative vision for Wensleydale and Swaledale. This provides an evidence base that will support investment opportunities in the Dales. We were invited to apply for stage two development support but sadly the eligibility criteria made it impossible to progress as a small voluntary run community organisation. However, small actions will still have big results and impact on the lives of those who aspire to a career in the creative industries. The Arts Festival returns for its fourth year in June 2026 which includes Twice Nightly - A celebration of the glory days of variety starring the hilarious Dominic Goodwin as Freddie Francis. Friday 5th (Askrigg), Saturday 6th (Leyburn) and Sunday 7th June (Reeth). Dom is no stranger to Swaledale - as well as his own productions, he has toured with North Country Theatre and appeared as the loveable panto Dame at The Georgian Theatre. If you have managed to catch

Cinderella, you'll know he rejoined the cast for an onscreen guest appearance! If not, there's still time to catch the final week of performances before the last show on Saturday 10th January. Back by popular demand is Colours Fashion Show with entertainment by Bee Darcey and local Makers Stalls on Wednesday 17th June (West Burton). This will be a hot ticket - on sale now so book yours early (only £8).



Top: Play, Record, Perform at the Dale Variety Show.

Bottom: Classical guitar from the Ukraine.

August - we supported Reeth Arts Festival which saw record numbers of artists, performers and visitors gather. A triumph for the Imogen and her team of volunteers.

Cont'd

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FEAST Activity Days - We are proud had playing bucket drums, Boom to be part of the holiday activities Whackers, singing and sharing personal programme which offers children and achievements on the drum kit, piano and young people opportunities to come guitar—see pictures below. together for crafts, sport, music and healthy eating activities in a fun, friendly and safe environment during the school holidays. North Yorkshire Together coordinate over 50 providers to provide enriching activities across the region as part of the DFES funded Government initiative.

October - over 700 people enjoyed the fifth **Leyburn Jazz Festival**. Record breaking audiences attended all styles of Jazz across the four days. Young people enjoyed a master class with Paul Edis developing their improvisation and ensemble skills. Whether you are a Jazz enthusiast or 'Jazz isn't your thing', we know the 2026 Festival which takes place Thursday 15th to Sunday 18th October 2026 promises something for everyone to enjoy.

November - is always a busy period preparing for festive concerts - more in our next report. **The Wensleydale Young Musician of the Year** is And finally!

delivered in partnership with Wensleydale Rotary. It was another the scenes' time spent mentoring, fantastic competition - Congratulations to everyone who took part. Alex Douthwaite (11 years old) will go forward and represent Richmondshire in the next round of Rotary's national Young Musician competition in February. The hidden hours and unseen 'behind scenes' time spent mentoring, coaching and being a listening ear for anyone who is in need of support. From business development and goal setting to hardship and crisis, to preparation for exams or taking on new challenges, our volunteers and practitioners are here to help.

Get Musical - We finished the year with another round of Get Musical If you can help support our work as a workshops for 6-11 year olds thanks to volunteer or by making a donation we funding from AMP, Youth Music and would love to hear from you. Arts Council England. A lot of fun was



BlueBoxt 2026 DIARY DATES (so far!)

- Spring Lunch with vocalists Gail Barlow and Colin Bailey - Saturday 2nd May (Thoralby).
- Wensleydale Community Arts Festival - Various events throughout June.
- Twice Nightly - A celebration of the glory days of Variety. With Dominic Goodwin as Freddie Francis. Friday 5th June (Askrigg), Saturday 6th (Leyburn) and Sunday 7th (Reeth).
- Colours Fashion Show with entertainment by Bee Darcey and local Makers Stalls - Wednesday 17th June (West Burton).
- Quiz Night with Simon Eastwood - Friday 9th October (West Burton).
- Leyburn Jazz Festival - Thursday 15th to Sunday 18th October.
- Young Musician Of The Year Competition - Sunday 22nd November (Leyburn).

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Coast to Coast Upgrade Completed

Yorkshire Dales National Park rangers have upgraded a section of the "Coast to Coast" path to National Trail quality standard.

A three-kilometre-long stone-flagged surface has been laid over a notoriously treacherous peat bog in Birkdale, part of the Kirkby Stephen to Keld section of the trail. The final flagstone was laid in October.

Local MP Rishi Sunak campaigned successfully for the Coast to Coast path to become a National Trail. He met rangers recently and has congratulated the team for doing a "fantastic job".

Completion of the work paves the way for Natural England to formally open the Coast to Coast National Trail in spring next year.

Area Ranger for Swaledale Michael Briggs has been part of the team on the ground, engaging with walkers on the trail while marshalling two teams each comprised of three staff including a digger driver.



Aerial view of the completed Coast to Coast path in Birkdale

After a two-month stint on White Mossy Hill, he said: "For me one of the best parts of the job has been chatting to people walking by. They all love the path we've made. There's been so many international walkers and some were dreading this section because they'd been told how boggy it can be. People could not have been more appreciative."

A coast to coast route from the Irish Sea at St Bee's in Cumberland to the North Sea at Robin Hood's Bay was originally described by Alfred Wainwright in 1973. Over time three pathways emerged to navigate the peatland at White Mossy Hill in Birkdale. The newly surfaced route uses the most popular of the three ways and has become a public right of way in agreement with the local estate.

Rangers began work in August last year with a planned pause for the delivery of more materials and ground nesting bird season. Work resumed in August this year for ten weeks.

Member Champion for Recreation Management at the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority, Lizzie Bushby, said: "The funding we have received from Natural England to enhance the Coast to Coast route in Birkdale has proved to be a win-win. We have been able to protect important peatland habitat from damage, while creating a sustainable route for walkers and making it more enjoyable.

"The new stone-flagged path is wide enough for people using mobility aids. It's not a route for everyone, but it will give more people a better chance of getting up to the peaks above Birkdale, one of the

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most remote places in the National Park. On a fine day you can see all the way down Swaledale from the new path.

"We hope that National Trail status will make the Coast to Coast route even more popular, giving a boost to local businesses. There can be few better ways of experiencing the special qualities of the Yorkshire Dales National Park than walking the trail between Kirkby Stephen in Westmorland and Richmond in North Yorkshire."

In addition to the stone-flagged path at Birkdale, signage of the route is being installed throughout the Yorkshire Dales section of the trail, with more than 40 new fingerposts pointing the way and five new bridges so far.



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	10.30 am	Low Row URC	
	10.30 am	St. Joseph & Francis Xavier Richmond	Mass
	11.00 am	St. Edmund's, Marske	Holy Communion
	11.00 am	Holy Trinity Low Row	Eucharist
	11.00 am	Reeth Evangelical Congregational	
	2.30 pm	Gunnerside Methodist	Covenant Service
	4.00 pm	Reeth Evangelical Congregational	Refreshments from 3.45 pm
11th Jan.	9.30 am	St. Andrew's Grinton	Eucharist
	9.30 am	St Michael's Downholme	Morning Prayer
	10.30 am	St. Joseph & Francis Xavier Richmond	Mass
	11.00 am	Reeth Evangelical Congregational	
	11.00 am	St. Edmund's, Marske	Morning Prayer
	11.15 am	St. Mary's Arkengarthdale	Holy Communion BCP
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Church Opening Times and Services in January

18th Jan.	9.15 am	St. Mary's Muker	<i>Holy Communion BCP</i>
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	11.00 am	Holy Trinity Low Row	<i>Service for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity</i>
	11.00 am	Reeth Evangelical Congregational	
	11.00 am	St. Edmund's, Marske	<i>Holy Communion</i>
	2.30 pm	Gunnerside Methodist	
	4.00 pm	Reeth Evangelical Congregational	<i>Refreshments from 3.45 pm</i>
25th Jan.	9.30 am	St. Andrew's Grinton	<i>Eucharist</i>
	9.30 am	St Michael's Downholme	<i>Holy Communion</i>
	10.30 am	St. Joseph & Francis Xavier Richmond	<i>Mass</i>
	11.00 am	Reeth Evangelical Congregational	
	11.00 am	St. Edmund's, Marske	<i>Holy Communion</i>
	11.15 am	St. Mary's Arkengarthdale	<i>Holy Communion BCP</i>
	4.00 pm	Reeth Evangelical Congregational	<i>Refreshments from 3.45 pm</i>

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Whilst we operate at a national level, a good amount of our training is undertaken here in Swaledale and we are wholly reliant on the generosity of farmers, landowners and individuals who give us the opportunity to train our

team to the highest standards, in different environments and with real life distractions.

We are a not-for-profit organisation and are largely self-funded, but if you would like to find out more about what we do, then please visit our website or Facebook page.



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Protecting Birds of Prey – Inside the Work of UK Wildlife Crime Policing

Following on from its **Eyes on the Skies** campaign launch in October (watch at: www.youtube.com/@friendsofthedes), Friends of the Dales next campaign event will be an online talk taking place **Tuesday 27 January, 5:30pm – 7:00pm**:

Join Detective Inspector Mark Harrison of the UK National Wildlife Crime Unit for insight into the real-world challenges of protecting vulnerable and endangered birds of prey in North Yorkshire.

In this exclusive online talk, Mark will share true stories from the frontline of wildlife crime policing, revealing the realities, challenges and successes faced by officers working to safeguard some of our most at-risk species.

He will also address common misconceptions on the role of policing in tackling birds of prey persecution. Expect an honest and informative discussion about:

- The key challenges in investigating bird of prey crimes
- What's working well and where improvements are needed
- Future plans, strategies, and innovative policing tactics

And, a look at a few fascinating real-life cases

Book your **free** place here:
www.friendsofthedes.org.uk/events

You can also sign up to Friends of the Dales monthly e newsletter on its website homepage to be kept up to date with all **Eyes on the Skies** campaign developments and future events.



Short-eared owl, photo Dave Dimmock



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loved music

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Key dates:

Booking is open earlier than usual to help you plan your Festival experience:
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Friends priority booking opens **Monday 2 February**

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www.swalefest.org

Festival Friends

Become a Festival Friend and enjoy a two-week priority booking period beginning Monday 2 February, along with an invitation to an exclusive Friends' Reception during the Festival - and, of course, the warm glow of helping to make something truly special happen here in the Dales.

To take out or renew your membership, visit www.swalefest.org or call our office on 01748 880018 with any enquiries.



Calling our Volunteers! Volunteers' Briefing: Tuesday 20 January

Could you volunteer as a steward, driver, accommodation host or leaflet distributor? Would you like to meet new people and help deliver our special festival? We warmly welcome all volunteers - past, present and future! - to our Volunteer Briefing on **Tuesday 20 January 2026** from 2.30 to 3.45pm at Reeth Memorial Hall. Find out what the roles involve, sign up to events and have a cup of tea.

Be part of Swaledale Festival's celebration of the seasons with our poetry call!!

Join us in celebrating the changing seasons through poetry. This exciting open call welcomes everyone - from seasoned professionals to complete newcomers - to share their creativity. We're celebrating poets of all ages, backgrounds, and experience levels, putting new work at the heart of the Festival. All entries will be considered for publication and celebration before and during **Swaledale Festival 2026**.

As the evenings draw in, why not brighten the dark with your **winter-inspired poems**? For more information, please visit our website.

www.swalefest.org

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SWAAG

The archaeology and local history group has now moved into its winter programme where our talks are on Zoom and so open to members only. On 13th January Jane Harrison will talk about the Archaeology of Peru. More details are on the website at <https://new-swaag.org/our-events-diary/>. You may join the Group using the form on the website at <https://new-swaag.org/join-us/>. The fee is now half-price, i.e. £10, for the half-year to July. Membership will include five talks and the opportunity to participate in a local archaeological dig in the summer. Most of our talks are recorded and available to members a week or so after the talk.

Continuing our look at features prominent in the local landscape, opposite Healaugh on the North-facing slopes of Harkerside is Maiden Castle; it is well worth a visit. Surrounded by what must have been massive ditches and banks two thousand or so years ago when it was constructed, it is sometimes called a hillfort. It is neither a hillfort nor a castle! It is classified as a defended settlement but it is in a poor position to defend, as an attacker could go up above and throw spears, fire arrows down upon people below. With a long walled-avenue to the East it is possibly a ceremonial site or perhaps the grand home of the local chieftain in the Iron Age. To learn more about the site simply enter 'maiden castle' in the search box on SWAAG's home page at new-swaag.org .

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Joint Winner of the May Sinclair Essay Prize Jake Frankland

This is the second of the two winning essays in the May Sinclair Essay Prize. The other was published in the December issue. We thank the authors, their families and Reeth and Gunnerside School for giving us permission to print them. We hope you enjoy them. We were very impressed by all the essays, which were varied, personal and perceptive, and a great credit to the children, and their school. Once again, space restrictions have limited the number of illustrative photographs that can be included.

Helen Bainbridge & Barbara Windle

My Family of Firefighters - Then and Now

Introduction

I am very proud to come from a line of family members who have served and, in some cases, are still serving their community as retained fire fighters in Reeth. My Grandad, Dad, Great Uncle and Second Cousin have all, at some point, had to rush to the fire station at any moment, day or night, to help people in need, while still working in a 'normal' job.

In this essay I will be looking at my Grandad's and my Dad's time in the fire service and I will be discussing how things have changed over the years and how things may change if I were to become a fire fighter in the future.

Leading Firefighter Grandad

My Grandad joined the retained crew at Reeth in 1975 at 25 years of age. His training began with looking and learning about the different equipment

at Reeth station, memorising the contents of his locker and practising knots. He then moved onto going out on drills where he learnt how to roll hoses, use ladders correctly and work pumps. An officer would watch him to make sure he was doing well. Later, he progressed onto Breathing Apparatus (BA) practice, but he wasn't allowed to wear them in a fire straight away. He learnt how to clean them and check the gauges. Part of his practice with the BA sets was to crawl through a dark manmade tunnel at Catterick station. It was like a rabbit warren with dead ends in places. He had to find his way out while wearing his equipment. Eventually Grandad went on a course at Ripon where he had to do training inside a controlled burning building, the 'Hot House'. This taught him how to fight an actual fire and wear his BA set.

After a couple of years, he was a fully qualified fire fighter.



When Grandad first started in the fire service his Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) was a cork helmet, a thick overcoat with silver buttons, yellow waterproof trousers with a hessian lining, wellies, rubber gloves and a neckerchief which could be used over his mouth when there was a little bit of smoke.

He also carried an axe and a whistle which could be blown, only in an emergency, to warn other fire fighters of any serious dangers, like a suspected collapse. The whistle had the very grand name 'Acme Thunder' I had a try, and it was very loud, it's a good name for it!



Grandad also had a dress uniform jacket with silver bars on the shoulders showing his rank (Lead Firefighter).

In the early days the firefighters were informed of a fire by a klaxon in their houses. It was very loud and used to wake up my dad and uncle when they were babies. There was also a siren behind the bus shelter on Reeth green that used to wake up the whole village too. This was later replaced by a huge personal alerter, similar to what is used today to the great relief to the wives and villagers!

Once the fire fighters got to the station the emergency details would come through on a printer and by telephone. The fire fighters would press a button on the wall to acknowledge they were going to respond. Then they would jump onto the fire engine and set off.

The fire engine was very different too. It wasn't 4x4 so getting to moor fires was hard. They had to carry the equipment, sometimes for miles, before they could start fighting the flames. They even had to have help from the army 'Green Goddess' trucks in some cases.

On the fire engine you would find a first aid kit with just bandages and basic supplies, no cutting gear, a 'Dosimeter' to detect radiation, triple extension ladder which surprisingly was made out of wood, a shorter ladder, a separate flashing blue beacon which could be placed on the road to show there was a hazard and torches.

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Heart and Craft - Tuesday 13th and 27th - 10am

Tai Chi - Tuesday 20th - 10.30 am - contact us to book your place on the next course

Workout Wednesday - 14th, 21st and 28th - Functional Strength - 6.30pm and Tabata 7.45pm - £5 per class

Badminton - Thursday evenings - contact us to find out more

Dixon County - Live Country Band - 31st - 7.00pm - tickets £10



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Navigation was usually done using local knowledge, road maps and walkie talkies. If the walkie talkies didn't have a signal someone would have to run to a phone box to call for directions or to let dispatch know when the fire was out.

In a busy year, Reeth fire crew would only get about 12 call outs, although they did often have to go and help the full time crew at Richmond Station. They were mainly house fires, chimney fires and moor fires, with an occasional animal rescue. As part of my research I enjoyed reading a newspaper article which describes a cow rescue. It shows the banter the crew had and how it was sometime fun work.

My Grandad served for 28 years, 7 of which as Lead Firefighter. (second in command)



After 20 years he received a golden long service medal and at another time, a silver jubilee medal in honour of the queen.

He also received trophies, one made from coal, to celebrate his retirement and all his proud years of service

Fire Fighter Dad

My dad became a member of Reeth Retained Fire crew in 2009 when he was 36 years old.

To apply he sent in a paper application form then had two interviews. He had to have medical check-ups like eye tests, hearing tests and fitness tests. While he was waiting for these, he spent four weeks going to drill nights at the station to practise knots, ladders and safety. He then went to Easingwold

on a two-week intensive 'Safe to Ride' course. On the course he had to get up and do lots of exercise before breakfast. Then he would do classroom learning then a practical test before lunch. After lunch he would do it again and then finish the day by cleaning his kit. He learnt to roll out hoses, use ladders safely, safety training and a bit of BA training at the end. When he passed this course, he was given an alerter and was allowed to go out on fire calls. He wasn't allowed to wear a BA set yet. He needed more training for that.

After his 'Safe to Ride' course he did many more over two years. I have listed them below.

BA course (1 week)

RTC (Road Traffic Collision) (1 week)

First Aid (Few days)

Confined Space (Few days)

Water Rescue (few days)

Working at Heights (few days)

HAZMAT (1 week)

Each course must be re-done as a refresher at certain times.

The whole time he was doing these courses he was studying for an NVQ in Firefighting and working a full time 'normal' job. I'm very proud of him as he has dyslexia like me and if he can do it, so can I!

My Dad's uniform is a European style helmet with eye protection and full-face protection options. A flash hood which protects his neck and ears from the heat. A fire tunic (coat) and leggings which can withstand 800 degrees centigrade for a short time. Gloves and wellies which are chemical proof. In his pockets he has a personal

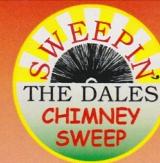


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line rope, a whistle for emergencies, earplugs, debris gloves which give a better grip on wet ladders or at RTCs, a waterproof chinagraph pencil to write on wet boards and a knife.

When there is an emergency my dad's alerter will go off. This is a small machine like a pager. The Klaxon is now inside the station. He must get to the station as quickly as possible. When the crew gets there, they will see a message on a 'Tip Sheet' printer giving them details. They put on their PPE and jump on the fire engine. Inside the cab there is a machine called an MDT (Mobile Data Terminal) on which they press a button to say they are responding. The MDT is amazing! It is a satnav with updated routes, but it also has any information you can imagine on it. It can give you all the details of the incident, with updates, what type of fire and what's likely to be needed to put it out. It has information on every car made and where the airbags are and where the softer areas are in case it needs cutting. The MDT can also give information on how to tackle any event or situation from chemical spills to terrorism. It has so much information! The new 4x4 fire engine is well stocked with cutting gear, HazMat suits, water rescue equipment like dry suits, reach poles and hose inflation kits. Also, a parrot hood which are like gas masks that a casualty can wear when being rescued to help them breathe and First aid kit with oxygen, hoses, defibrillator, ladders, decontamination kits and even a pet resuscitation kit.

Reeth crew currently has approximately 40 call outs each year but in 2025 they have already reached that number and it's only June! It has been so hot there have been a lot of moor fires.



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Then, Now and in the Future

There have been so many changes in the 50 years since my Grandad's day on the fire engine. The application process and training has become much more intensive with a lot more responsibilities for the fire service, like Water rescue and Road Traffic Collision training. But thankfully the PPE uniform has improved drastically! Gone are the days of the woollen overcoat. Now, with new fabrics the fire service PPE weighs less, is more waterproof, can withstand more heat, it has reflective bands like you would find on a builder's vest, lighter colour that's easier to see and it can resist some chemicals. The flash hood which is a new addition can stop ears and neck burning. I think my Grandad would have been very uncomfortable in his time as his overcoat would have got wet and the steam would burn him in that heat, and without a flash hood he would have had sore ears. My Dad is very lucky to have the new PPE. In the future there will be smarter technology which will make the materials used in making PPE lighter and more comfortable. It will be able to manage moisture more effectively to make fire fighters more comfortable. They will also include sensors that will monitor the health of the firefighters and assess environmental conditions that can help with safety and decision-making. The helmets will be equipped with HUD's (Heads-Up Display) which projects thermal imaging, coordinates, and data on other team members straight to the firefighter's visor. AI will also help with analyzing data. Also, more chemical protection will add to my

future safely if I was to become a fire fighter.

Technology has improved a lot too especially with the new MDT that my Dad has recently got in the fire engine. Also, today's fire service no longer have to walk for miles across the moors while carrying a hose. They have machines like the 'Argo-cat' which is a 8x8 all-terrain vehicle for moor fires.



The fire engine is now more fully equipped with cutting gear and more specialised equipment since the duties of the modern crew have grown.

Fire fighters today also have Hazard Warning Plates that warn people about dangerous substances and areas. You can find them on HGV wagons, bottles, door signs, telegraph poles and anywhere where something can cause harm to people, animals or the environment. They are useful to the fire service because they can help to identify hazards from a distance and the risks they pose to the fire crew and the public. They can help with decisions on what precautions are needed, such as the correct PPE (Personal Protective Equipment) or a full Hazmat suits and what is needed to put the fire out.

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A small selection of early Hazard Warning Plates were only introduced in 1965. Over the years more have been added.

Conclusion

I'm very proud of my family especially with them overcoming dyslexia difficulties. The only thing that hasn't changed over the years is why they do such a dangerous job. Both my Dad and Grandad told me how proud it makes them to serve the community and be part of a team where you depend on others and they depend on you to keep everyone safe and alive. It is comforting too when you go to an emergency and the person affected sees a familiar face. It's a lot of hard work but the "best job in the world," said my Dad.

I hope one day I can be a firefighter too and make them as proud of me as I am of them!



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Sustainable Swaledale

Come and join us in 2026!

We are an active and friendly volunteer-led group based in Arkengarthdale and Swaledale, aiming to promote positive environmental change. Winner of the North Yorkshire Council Community Awards 2023 Caring for the Environment Award.

Meetings, Facebook, website and newsletter

The group meets on the first Thursday of each month at 7.00pm. A moderated Facebook group of 400 plus members help us to keep up to date with current news and local issues. Our website holds details of our projects. Our newsletter goes out to over 200 people and we have a monthly column in the Reeth Gazette.

A little of what we have been up to in 2025

In the last year volunteers has planted over 3,000 saplings in woodland or hedgerows across 10 sites in the two dales as part of the Together for Trees Project (a total of 15,000 saplings planted across 50 sites over the last 5 years). We are grateful to Tees-Swale: naturally connected (TSNC) and Yorkshire Dales Millennium Trust (YDMT) for their support. Our 50 volunteers have been joined by Gunnerside School children, Rosie Page (daughter of "James

Herriot", a sponsor of the YDMT Seed to Sapling Project) and our MP Rishi Sunak who visited the Reeth Surgery Vegetable beds where the school children also have a raised bed.



Volunteers with Rosie Page (far right)

We have collected local seeds and cuttings of rarer willows as part of the Seed to Sapling project and are raising the saplings within tree nurseries until they mature to planting size. We have planted over 150 locally raised saplings so far with more planned for 2026/2027. We are grateful to Reeth Surgery and St Mary's Arkengarthdale for hosting our tree nurseries.

We held seedling potting on sessions in June and seed planting sessions in October as part of the Reeth Community Orchard Apple Day.



Potting on day (top) & seed planting (below)

"James Volunteers continued to restore Swale

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Trail hedges near Low Houses using traditional hedge laying techniques and We will be helping to support the have removed thousands of redundant Homes for Dales Birds National Lottery tree guards from a mature woodland. 3 year funded project to support house sparrows, house martins, swifts and

Our Reeth Surgery Veg beds starlings ("Incredible Edible" project) have continued to provide produce which is free for anyone to take.



Reeth Surgery raised beds

We have helped to cut meadows maintaining valuable hay meadow habitat and completed our WingIT project in which we monitored bird numbers, built bird boxes, set up some nest cams and produced guidance on supporting swifts, swallows and martins (available on the website)

If any of this has whetted your appetite, please do get in touch. We are a small group and would love to attract more members or volunteers. Even if you can only spare a couple of hours and would like to plant a tree, please come and join in with some of our projects.



Volunteers hedge laying on the Swale Trail

Wishing you all a Happy New Year!
Margaret and Liz

Sustainable Swaledale Group

Find out more and join in

Activities planned for the first half of 2026

We will continue tree planting up to March with further hedge laying planned for the Swale Trail. We hope to remove the last tree guards from a woodland near a footpath leaving a more natural woodland on view

Meeting: first Thursday of the month at 7pm. Please contact us for venue details.

Email: info@sustainableswaledale.org

Phone: the Secretary on 07503 767 214

Facebook Group: Sustainable Swaledale

Website: www.sustainableswaledale.org

We will replant the Reeth Surgery Community vegetable beds and are always looking for volunteers to help plant, tend or water the raised beds.

We will arrange another potting on day in June to transplant the seedlings from our seed boxes to root trainers.

The Gazette is online:
www.2dales.org.uk

NHS urges public to help combat antimicrobial resistance this winter

Taking antibiotics will not make a difference against many of the winter bugs now in circulation.

That's the message from clinical leaders in Humber and North Yorkshire.

They say antibiotics are only effective against bacterial infections - and they have no impact against viral infections like flu and other viruses which trigger common colds.

With winter here and seasonal bugs circulating, the NHS in Humber and North Yorkshire is urging the public to play a vital role in the fight against antimicrobial resistance (AMR).

Taking antibiotics when they are not needed, means they can be less effective further down the line when they are.

While a cold virus runs its course there are ways we can speed up our recovery or make symptoms feel less severe, such as getting plenty of bed rest, drinking lots of fluids (particularly water) and speaking with your pharmacy team about over-the-counter medication such as paracetamol or ibuprofen.

Dr Nigel Wells, NHS Humber and North Yorkshire Integrated Care Board's (ICB) Executive Director for Clinical and Professional, said: "With common winter viruses, there's no quick fix - no silver bullet. Our bodies are usually capable of fighting off viral infections on their own by activating the immune system.

"After a week or two, most people will start to feel better without the need for antibiotics. Unless there are underlying health conditions or other aggravating factors, I typically advise self-care and a

visit to a local pharmacy for over-the-counter remedies rather than issuing a prescription."

This advice on treating winter ailments comes as part of World Antimicrobial Awareness Week (which took place 18-24 November), with this year's theme: "Act Now: Protect Our Present, Secure Our Future".

AMR happens when germs like bacteria, viruses and fungi become resistant to the drugs meant to kill them. This makes infections harder to treat, increases the spread of disease, and can lead to severe, life-threatening illnesses or even death.

Drug resistance can render antibiotics and other treatments ineffective, turning once-manageable infections into serious health threats

Laura Angus, NHS Humber and North Yorkshire ICB's Chief Pharmacy Officer, said: "Many common illnesses can be managed at home with a well-stocked medicine cabinet. For coughs and colds, over-the-counter remedies and plenty of rest are usually all you need.

"If you do need to see your GP, please follow their advice and only use antibiotics when absolutely necessary.

Always complete the full course if prescribed and seek advice from your local pharmacy if needed."

To help slow the spread of winter viruses and protect others:

Stay home and avoid contact with others if you're unwell

Wash hands regularly with soap and water, or use an alcohol-based hand sanitiser

Cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue or your elbow, and dispose of tissues properly

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If you're eligible, you may be entitled to flu and COVID vaccinations. There's more information on the NHS website: www.nhs.uk/nhs-services/pharmacies/book-flu-vaccination/

Never save antibiotics for later use or give them to others - they may not work properly and could make the problem worse. Do not put unused antibiotics in the bin or down the toilet, sink, or drain. Return unused antibiotics to a pharmacy for destruction.

Additional health and wellbeing advice is available on Let's Get Better: [Let's get better - Let's Get Better](#)

If you are a parent worried about your child's symptoms, advice can be found on the Healthier Together website: <https://www.hnyhealthiertogether.nhs.uk/child-under-5-years>



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Glen Steward

Tickets for concerts are available from Reeth PO or phone Glen Steward (01748 884989) or visit www.reethmemorialhall.weebly.com - tickets $\frac{1}{2}$ price u16s. All concerts 8pm unless otherwise stated - doors 7.30pm

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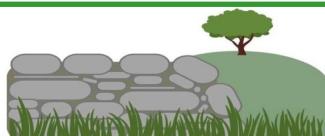
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Diary Dates

January

Thurs 1st Jan - Reeth Fireworks on the Green 7.00pm

Fri 2nd Jan - T'Own Roy Dominoes, Muker Public Hall 7.30pm

Tues 13th Jan - Heart and Craft Low Row Institute 10am and then Arkengarthdale Hub 2pm

Sat 17th Jan - 10am to 12 noon, Coffee morning, Reeth Evangelical Congregational Church

Tues 20th Jan - Heart and Craft Muker Public Hall 10am

Institute Thurs 22nd Jan - Heart and Craft Reeth Memorial Hall 2pm

Sat 24th Jan - Jazz Night - The Good Vibes Trio + 2-course evening meal @ The Station CafeBar, Richmond to book Call 01748 825967 or email reservations@thestation.co.uk

Tues 27th Jan - Heart and Craft Low Row Institute 10am and then Arkengarthdale Hub 2pm

Sat 31st Jan - Dixon County Gig, Low Row LI

February

Fri 13th Feb - Domino Drive and New Year Raffle, CB Function Room, 7.30

Sat 21st Feb - 10am to noon, Coffee Morning, Reeth Evangelical Congregational Church

March

Fri 6th Mar - Gaz Brookfield, Reeth Memorial Hall

Fri 20th Mar - Blackbeard's Tea Party, Reeth Memorial Hall

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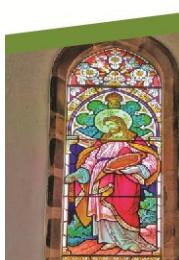


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