



KEY CHARACTERISTICS

- Relatively straight classic u-shaped glaciated dale over limestone, with steep wooded sides enclosing the broad, largely open flat valley floor with gently sweeping lower valley sides, contrasting with the open topland and allotments and limestone pavements above.
- Stepped and banded pattern of rock outcrops dominate upper slopes (particularly marked south of Kettlewell and Arncliffe) within adjacent open toplands or associated with dale side ancient woodlands.
- Small steep sided and often wooded tributary valleys and numerous small rocky gills, creating a notched pattern to the valley side and near horizon line, the gills crossing the stepped rock bands in a series of small waterfalls.
- Larger tributary valleys are infrequent hence the form of the dale maintains a strong definition over stretches of several kilometres, enhancing its sense of place.
- The shallow river meanders across the farmed valley floor, its course marked by well-treed banks, the river disappearing below ground for much of the year north of Littondale to expose a dry rocky bed.
- Strong and distinctive patterns of field barns and dry stone walls constructed largely in limestone enclose pasture and hay meadows with occasional field boundary trees.
- Hay meadows that abound with wildflowers in summer are almost continuous to the north of Kettlewell and concentrated near settlements south of Kettlewell and within Littondale.
- Traditional well-treed mainly gritstone nucleated villages often sited where tributaries meet the river on lower south west facing slopes are unified in their form, colour and siting and often appear in complete harmony with their landscape setting, making them very sensitive to occasional inappropriate development.
- Small pockets of dark coniferous planting weaken character and contrast with the light colours of the landscape.
- Extensive limestone pavements are a feature of the mid and upper valley sides and adjacent toplands particularly to the south of Kettlewell and Arncliffe. Presence of other features typical of limestone scenery add local interest including limestone gorges, limestone cliffs and the truncated spur at Kilnsey Crag, a landmark within the dale.
- Moorland vegetation runs down into valley in certain areas, particularly upper Littondale.
- Sense of enclosure and unity created by the valley form, colour and the pattern of elements diminishes towards upper Littondale, where moorland vegetation becomes increasingly dominant.