

Wensleydale

+ Physical Influences

Wensleydale is a long, open and broad dale gently rising to the flat topped hills that enclose it and give it its individual character. Until the beginning of the 18th century the name Yoredale, or Uredale after its river, the Ure, persisted alongside the name Wensleydale, after Wensley, an important market town up until the middle of the 16th century.

Beneath Wensleydale, 500m below the surface, is a pink granite, known as Wensleydale Granite, which is some 400 million years old. About 350 million years ago the Great Scar Limestone was deposited upon the eroded surface of the granite. This is now only visible from Dysart to Appersett along the valley floor, but is also present at Raydale and Bishopdale although here it is mostly covered by glacial deposits.

On top of the limestone lies the Yoredales, which comprise a repeated series limestone, shale and sandstone layers. In 1835 the geologist John Phillips chose Wensleydale as his type area and hence the name Yoredales was derived. The Yoredales vary in thickness at different locations within the dales but at Askrigg, for example, they are 275m deep.

The Yoredales are primarily responsible for the unique landscape in Wensleydale. The easily eroded shales form the gentler slopes of the valley sides, the harder limestones exposed as horizontal scars and steps on the valley sides, such as the prominent step of Hardraw limestone upon which the village of Thornton Rust is built. The Yoredales have also given rise to numerous waterfalls in the dale, formed by alternating beds of hard limestone and sandstone within the soft shales. The best example is Hardraw Force with the highest single drop (27m) in England. Mill Gill Force and Whitfield Force are of similar origin.

High Scars such as Ellerkin Scar near Askrigg and High Clint near Hardraw have been formed by the 22m thick Main limestone from the Upper Carboniferous period that lies above the Yoredale series. The Main limestone also caps the flat-topped hills, such as Crag Hill and Wether Fell. On top of this is a bed of chert mixed with limestone. Chert was quarried at Flint Hill for use in the ceramic industry.

Millstone Grit outcrops on top of the fells to the north and south of the dale, including Dodd Fell, Penhill, Great Haw and a small patch on Wether Fell and more widely on Great Shunner Fell to the north. Coal seams have been worked in places, as on the sides of Great Shunner Fell.

Uplift of the granite about 330 million years resulted in faults in the overlying rock strata, allowing the formation of mineral seams including lead ore, calcite, fluorite, barite and other minerals, some of which have been exploited in the past.

There are numerous sink holes and swallowholes on the upper surfaces of the limestone and springs lower down where the streams reappear at its foot, for example above Thornton Rust.

The Ice Age impacted upon Wensleydale by carving out the u-shaped valleys, although each of the dales was affected differently. The main glacier in Wensleydale was less erosive than in some of the side valleys, such as Bishopdale, which contained a steep and active glacier leading to the significant deepening of the valley. Waldendale's v-shape profile shows that it was little affected by ice.

As the glaciers retreated, deposits were left which exert a significant influence on the present day landscape. These include drift tails, relatively unusual features formed at the junction of tributary valleys. Comprised of glacial till, they are seen joined to the spurs of the tributary valleys and form long tails pointing downstream and are often moulded into drumlin-like shapes and tend to divert the incoming streams further to the east. This deflection of the tributaries is responsible for many of the waterfalls within the tributaries. Examples can be seen at Cotterdale Beck where a drift tail has contributed to the formation of Cotter Force, and Fossdale Gill is deflected over Hardraw Force and round the drift tail. There is a large drift tail between Bishopdale and Wensleydale.

Glacial drumlins can be seen between Hell Gill and the Moorcock Inn and around and including Brough Hill (on which a Roman Fort was sited) between Bainbridge and Aysgarth.

Lateral moraines occur on both sides of the river near Aysgarth and Bainbridge. At Aysgarth there is a conspicuous terminal moraine and another crosses the valley floor at Brown Moor almost two miles below Hawes. Both of these moraines created dams across the river and held back shallow lakes for a time; these now form part of the flat river flood plain in these areas.

Semer Water is a natural lake of glacial origin, a rare feature and one of the largest in Yorkshire. It was dammed at its lower end by glacial debris and was formerly much bigger reaching further up Raydale; the overflow from the lake formed the gorge and falls of the River Bain above Bainbridge. The former course of the Bain at the Countersett end is blocked by a drift tail.

The River Ure has its source high on the side of Lunds Fell on the borders of Cumbria. At the Moorcock Inn, close to the dale head, the riverbed lies at 305m above sea level and from here to Kilgram Bridge at the lower end of the dale (a distance of 26 miles); the river drops 215m in height to just above 90m above sea level. About a third of this fall comes in the 3 miles between Redmire and Aysgarth with a series of waterfalls. Aysgarth Falls, one of the most popular tourist attractions in Wensleydale, were formed by a rise in the level of the land and are cut into thick limestones separated by thin shales that results in a stepped formation. Numerous other falls occur in Wensleydale including Cotter Force and falls at Gayle, West Burton and Widdale Beck, with many others on the tributary streams.

Soils that have developed in Wensleydale range from the rich, fertile loam and clay river alluvium and coarse loam and sand over gravel along the valley floors, to the fine loam and clayey upland soils with a very acidic peaty surface horizon. They closely reflect the underlying geology that varies considerably from bands of limestone, sandstone and shale to glacial till and floodplain river deposits. Landform has had an effect on soil development, the flat areas on tops of the fells and valley floors being poorly drained allowing the formation of peat, the slopes being better drained and supporting a richer flora. Lower down the slopes the soils are thicker and higher in mineral content.

† Historical and Cultural Influences

The first settlers of significance in Wensleydale were the Neolithic people. From about 4000 BC they entered and inhabited the less thickly wooded limestone terraces on the valley sides and left their mark by constructing large henges such as Castle Dykes near Aysgarth. The remains of a village on stilts have been found in the shallows of Semer Water, which is thought to date from the Neolithic period.

Around 2000 BC the Bronze Age settlers arrived and built stone circles and tumuli such as at Oxclose Pasture near Carperby and at Castle Tykes near Aysgarth. By the early Iron Age farming settlements were established and continued by the Celts until the Angles and Danes arrived. Sites of old Iron Age villages lie on Nab End, the western face of Penhill and at Addlebrough near Stone Raise.

The Brigantes arrived in the 3rd century BC, enclosed fields and grew crops such as barley wheat and peas. Communities settled high on Penhill and Addlebrough. When the Romans came, the Brigantes under Venutius offered fierce resistance by building a fort at Addlebrough. Once the Romans had broken the power of the Brigantes, in about AD74, they constructed one of the best preserved Pennine forts on Brough Hill at Bainbridge, which was connected by the Cam High Road to the Roman base at Ribchester.

Place names ending in 'ton', 'ley' and 'ham' are common in the southern parts of Wensleydale and are a result of the Anglian occupation during the 7th century. They had a well-organised communal living and farming system and cropland was ploughed in strips (furlongs). In the 9th century the Danes arrived in the main dale and some of the smaller side dales, leaving place names ending in 'by' and 'thorp', such as Thoralby, Carperby and Agglethorpe.

In the 10th century Norse Vikings came from the west into the head of Wensleydale. They were independent pastoral farmers from the Scandinavian mountains and left names such as 'sett' in Appersett, Burtersett and Countersett; and 'thwaite' in Braithwaite and Swinithwaite.

Much of the local population was wiped out by 1070 by the Norman conquerors who set aside large areas of Wensleydale as hunting forests. The Norse farmers were allowed to continue raising their livestock in return for taking care of the deer. The Normans built castles to establish their authority.

On William's Hill at Middleham there is a motte and bailey, the site of an early timbered castle built by the Normans. Later the stone castles at of Middleham and Bolton were built.

The monasteries had a great effect on both the lives of the people of the dale and the landscape. Norman Lords were generous in giving gifts to the monasteries, which they believed would ensure them a place in Heaven. Much of Wensleydale was in the control Cistercian Monks who founded Jervaulx Abbey in 1156. Jervaulx became wealthy, owning much of the land on the north side of the river above Askrigg known now as Abbotside. Outlying working farms or "granges" such as those at Braithwaite and Grange were established to manage the huge estate of Jervaulx Abbey. The main wealth was provided by wool from sheep, which eventually led to overgrazing and loss of wooded areas. Coverham Abbey was founded in 1212 by the Premonstratensians.

The dissolution of the monasteries in the 1530's brought difficult times for the ordinary people of the dale who relied on the trade they generated. Wealthy landowners benefited from the break up of the estates and a number of halls were built, including the Tudor manor house Coleby Hall near Askrigg, the castellated Nappa Hall, Danby Hall near Middleham and Braithwaite Hall on the opposite side of the valley.

Lynchets, seen near Askrigg, Carperby and Castle Bolton developed in the late medieval period, the natural result of many years of ploughing the hillsides. Fields were enclosed nearest to the villages first by stone walls and new farming methods developed such as liming, manuring and draining of boggy land. Old limekilns can be found along the hillsides, where limestone and coal or timber were burnt to produce lime for the fields and for building mortar. The majority of the drystone walls in the dale were built between 1780 and 1820.

Drove roads and packhorse routes are preserved as green lanes evident today. One of the main routes to Ingleton followed the Roman road from Askrigg, through Bainbridge and over Wether and Cam Fell; another went through the dale to Middleham and Masham.

Many of the small industries that developed such as the mining of lead, making of cheese, the wool industry and breeding of horses were originated by the monks of Jervaulx Abbey. Lead mining was once important; some 50 mines have been worked in Wensleydale. Today Wensleydale cheese is still made at Hawes and widely exported, although cheese making methods have changed greatly. The dale is still famed for the training of racehorses near Middleham. In addition to farming a number of craft based industries support the local economy including woollens, rope making, violin making, potteries and furniture making.

Wensleydale is generally quieter than some of the other Yorkshire Dales due to its distance from major urban centres. The numerous waterfalls provide perhaps the most popular tourist attraction. The many footpaths and bridleways, often following the level, regular terraces along the valley sides, make the dale popular with walkers and equestrians. Visitors are also attracted by the market towns and villages and their variety of shops, craft centres, pubs and cafes and attractions such as the Dales Countryside Museum and the Wensleydale creamery in Hawes, Middleham Castle, the Yorkshire Carriage Museum at Aysgarth and the model village in Leyburn. Bolton Castle is also an important attraction built in the 14th century by Richard, Lord Scrope who was Chancellor of England in 1378. Mary Queen of Scots was imprisoned here for 6 months in 1568. It is now open to visitors with furnished rooms and a dungeon. The Forbidden Corner, a maze and folly in the grounds of Tugill Park is a further visitor attraction within lower Coverdale.

The Yoredale Way, 160km long from York to Kirkby Stephen, follows the course of the River Ure through Wensleydale. Semer Water is popular for fishing, swimming, and windsurfing and there are National Park visitor centres at Hawes and Aysgarth Falls.

+ Buildings and Settlement

The earliest settlers formed small, isolated hamlets on the better-drained and less wooded limestone terraces of Wensleydale. When the Angles and Danes arrived more organised, clustered settlements developed.

Wensley was an important town in medieval times but during 1563 it suffered badly from plague and its population fell rapidly. Askrigg then developed as the chief market town until the end of the 18th

century when Hawes grew significantly. Leyburn, a small village for hundreds of years, became Wensleydale's main market town in the 19th century. Middleham benefited from its castle and is now a small market town. Bainbridge's location at the junction of a drove road and turnpike crossing proved favourable to its growth over the years.

The traditional dales house was simply designed with thick walls, facing south to give as much sunlight as possible with fewer windows on the north and west facing sides. The roofs were stone slated and low angled, and the doorways constructed from large blocks of gritstone with carved and decorated lintels often dated and initialled. A typical example is Worton Hall, one of the oldest farmhouses in Wensleydale, dated 1600.

Limekilns are still a prominent feature of the dale. They were located near to the limestone and the cheap coal seams found under the Yoredale limestones and Lower Millstone Grits, set partly into the hillside and below small quarries. The lime would be carried downhill to the fields for liming or to the villages for building mortar.

Bolton Castle, completed in 1399 and prominently positioned on the valley side, remains the best preserved medieval castle in the country.

The stone bridges at Aysgarth, Coverham Abbey, Wensley, Ulshaw and Kilgram are important historic features of Wensleydale and have survived centuries of flooding. Two of the pointed arches in Wensley Bridge may stem from the 14th century.

By the end of the 17th century the majority of houses and farms were built using the local gritstone and limestone. Gritstone was the best building stone; in areas where limestone was used for building gritstone was used for cornerstones and lintels. Limestone rubble, used as a building stone was gathered from boulders amongst the glacial drift. Older buildings and drystone walls were mixed with grit boulders and grit flags that give the variety of colour and texture evident today. The sandstones and flags, which are freely available in Wensleydale, are very poorly developed in the southern dales, leading to significant differences in the detailed character of buildings in the different dales.

+ Land Cover

Wensleydale supports a variety of habitats including a few small areas of broadleaved woodland, meadow and grasslands and a lake with associated wetlands. Upper and Mid Wensleydale, Raydale, Bishopdale, Waldendale and Coverdale are included in the Pennine Dales Environmentally Sensitive Area.

Semer Water, a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), is an upland lime-rich lake, one of only two in the Yorkshire Dales. The vegetation associated with the lake and its surrounding wetland demonstrates its gradual transition from open water to dry land. Bogbean, yellow water lily, bottlesedge, bulrush and water horsetail are found along the shorelines. There are areas of sedge, fen and reeds, and marshy meadowland with marsh marigold, ragged robin and water forget-me-knot. The lake is interesting for the large number of mayfly present; crayfish are also present in significant numbers. In winter whooper swans from Iceland arrive.

Woodlands are scattered throughout the dale, with Freeholders Wood SSSI at Aysgarth Falls on the north bank of the River Ure being of particular interest. It is one of very few examples of hazel coppice in the Yorkshire Dales, containing a mixture of mature and more recently coppiced hazel. Other tree species include ash, rowan, bird cherry and holly with thickets of hawthorn and blackthorn. The coppicing regime has allowed the development of a diverse ground flora including primrose, bluebell, dog's mercury, wood anemone, common, early and hairy dog violets. The ancient wood indicator herb paris is also present. Other areas of woodland include the beech woods at Mill Gill near Askrigg, those along the banks of the River Cover near Middleham and the wooded scars near West Burton.

There are several important grasslands within Wensleydale. The River Ure grasslands SSSI, near Thoralby, along with Wanlass Grasslands SSSI, located on the floodplain of the River Ure, are of special interest for the presence of burnt orchid, a nationally rare species that has declined significantly over the last few years. Other SSSI's include Swineley Meadows in Widdale; Pry and

Bottom Meadows at Mid-Mosssdale; Askrigg Bottoms and Walden Meadows, which are among the best examples of traditionally managed hay meadows in the National Park.

+ Wensleydale Landscape Character Areas

Landscape Character Types (Draft National Types in brackets)	Landscape Character Areas	Location
Limestone Dale with Ancient Woodland (VLA)	Upper Wensleydale	National Park boundary to south east of Moorcock Inn
Limestone Dale with Ancient Woodland (VLA)	Mid Wensleydale	Mossdale Tunnel to west of Bainbridge
Limestone Dale with Ancient Woodland (VLA) and a small area of Poorly Drained Lower Hills and Dales (UPA)	Lower Wensleydale	Bainbridge to National Park boundary
Limestone Dale with Ancient Woodland (VLA)	Cotterdale	North of Cotterdale to Cattle Grids
Limestone Dale with Ancient Woodland (VLA)	Widdale	Hazel House and West Field to junction at Lanacar Lane with B6255
Limestone Dale with Ancient Woodland (VLA)	Sleddale	South of Tongue Wood to south of Gayle
Limestone Dale with Ancient Woodland (VLA)	Raydale	Billinside Plantation to Gilledge Wood
Limestone Dale with Ancient Woodland (VLA)	Bishopdale	Dale Head to north of West Burton
Limestone Dale with Ancient Woodland (VLA)	Waldendale	South of Walden Head to south of Cote Bridge
Limestone Dale with Ancient Woodland (VLA) and a small area of Poorly Drained Lower Hills and Dales (UPA)	Coverdale	South of West Bottom Lathe to National Park boundary

8. Upper Wensleydale

+ Key Characteristics

- Elevated, open and remote, broad u-shaped valley overlying Yoredales, forming the wilder, upper reaches of Wensleydale.
- Gently graded valley sides to the north, becoming steeper and more enclosed further south.
- Drumlins either side of the river give a hummocky appearance to the valley floor over the lower and middle reaches, becoming wider and flatter further towards the dale head.
- River is shallow and fast-flowing with grassy, unvegetated banks.
- Frequent winding gills, often wooded, on eastern dale side, give an undulating, indented appearance.
- Large coniferous plantation at Lunds forms unsympathetic contrast to open character of valley.
- Few farmsteads present, generally located on the lower eastern side of the valley.
- Field sizes are medium along the valley floor becoming larger and more elongated higher up the valley sides, enclosed by crumbling walls with little evidence of repair.
- The valley floor and lower valley sides are predominantly sheep grazed rough or improved pasture, often with a high proportion of sedges, and very occasional hay meadows on the valley floor and lower valley sides. Sense of area slowly reverting back to moorland.
- Settle to Carlisle railway is highly visible running from north to south along the lower western side of the valley.

+ Landscape Character

Upper Wensleydale is an elevated, wild, very open and exposed broad u-shaped valley overlying rocks of the Yoredale series where the River Ure has its source. It is defined by the National Park boundary to the north, the High Way footpath to the east, the Settle to Carlisle railway to the west and the Moorcock Inn to the south. On the northern boundary it adjoins a character area defined by Cumbria County Council as type 13c Fells. The valley is contained at its head by the flat-topped presence of Wild Boar Fell beyond, which forms a dominant visual element within the dale. At the dale head the valley sides are open and gently graded and the valley floor is wide; further south drumlins give a hummocky appearance to the valley floor and valley sides are more steeply graded giving a stronger sense of enclosure.

There is a very strong moorland influence prevailing throughout the whole valley, with significant areas of moorland spilling over the valley sides reaching almost down to the river. The overall effect is of a remote, upland farmed landscape, which is slowly reverting to moorland vegetation types.

On the eastern side of the valley on Cotter Side limestone scars with associated boulders and scree are visible. The gills have a distinctive winding form given emphasis by the trees that line them. High up on the valley side there are shakeholes and a few caves present at the dale head, however, these are not obvious features.

The fast flowing River Ure meanders across the valley floor often hidden from view by its grassy banks and the topographic form of the valley.

The valley floor and lower valley sides are predominantly sheep grazed rough or improved pasture, often with a high proportion of sedges, and very occasional hay meadows on the valley floor and lower valley sides. There is evidence of a previously strong wall pattern containing medium sized,

irregularly shaped fields, changing to large regularly shaped fields of more recent enclosure higher up the valley sides. In many areas the walls are damaged and crumbling with no evidence of repairs and many of the fields have reverted back to moorland vegetation. These factors, combined with the overall remote, moorland character of the dale, gives a slight sense of desolation.

At Lunds a large dark coniferous woodland stretches from the road down to the river; it is an incongruous feature within the open landscape. Elsewhere tree cover is limited a few scattered copses of predominantly sycamore and ash with some alder, willow and birch and areas of gorse.

One road, the B6259, follows the dale, leading through the Eden Valley to Kirkby Stephen in the north, to Garsdale to the south west and following the River Ure to Appersett and Mid Wensleydale to the south east. Farmsteads are reached by tracks leading off this road over the river. The High Way, an old road used as a public footpath, runs from Mallerstang in the Eden Valley, along the eastern edge of Upper Wensleydale and joins the A684 just south of Cotterdale.

The few settlements within the valley are mainly located on the eastern side of the river or adjacent to the B6259 close to the valley floor. They are mainly farmsteads or single cottages constructed with local stone. A few buildings have been painted white, a practice more commonly seen within the Cumbrian Dales. In the northern areas of the valley a red sandstone forms a component of the drystone walls whilst further south they are constructed with the thinner cut flagstones more typical of the Yoredale series. There is little visual evidence of gentrification adding to the remote feel of the area.

The Settle to Carlisle railway is a very dominant linear feature within Upper Wensleydale, occasionally less visible as it enters cuttings or passes through short tunnels in the valley side. An ugly highly visible suburban style footbridge allows user of footpaths in this area to access the moorland to the west, detracting from the character of the valley.

There is one caravan/campsite located behind the Moorcock Inn on the east side of the river. At the time of survey this was not in use and therefore not obvious, however, during the height of the season it may become an intrusive feature due to its open position within the valley floor.

9. Mid Wensleydale

+ Key Characteristics

- Broad, open u-shaped glacial valley, overlying Great Scar limestone and with valley sides formed by rocks of the Yoredale series, forming the middle reaches of Wensleydale.
- Valley sides are unevenly stepped with sloping bands of outcropping rock. Limestone scars are visually important focal points, highly visible due to lack of vegetation cover.
- Glacial features such as drift tails and moraines form a rolling, undulating valley floor, which becomes flatter locally around Burtersett and Hawes.
- River broad and gently meandering with a stony channel and low grassy banks, generally hidden by undulating landform.
- Four tributary valleys forming distinctly separate character areas (Widdale, Sleddale, Raydale and Cotterdale) and a fourth (Hardraw Beck) forming part of this character area. Significant falls occur where some of these tributaries enter the main valley.
- Smaller gills and waterfalls are present higher up the valley slopes but are not visually significant, being lost within the overall grand scale of the valley.
- Sparse vegetation cover comprises of small mixed woodland blocks, scattered copses and trees in clumps across the valley floor, on top of hillocks and on the lower valley slopes. Scrub and scree occur higher up valley sides. Some areas open and exposed with very little vegetation.
- Main settlement is market town of Hawes, tourist centre for the whole of Wensleydale. Many other significant villages of typical linear form and numerous farmhouses of traditional construction in local stone with stone flagged roofs. Evidence of modernisation and tourist pressures with many Bed and Breakfasts and holiday cottages.
- Field pattern a strong visual feature defined by drystone walls in good condition, slightly diluted by undulating landform. Around Hawes fields are small becoming larger higher up the valley sides. Barns located mainly on field boundaries are a strong visual element.
- The majority of pastures are improved although hay meadows are well represented.

+ Landscape Character

Mid Wensleydale is a broad, open unwooded u-shaped glacial valley, overlying Great Scar limestone and with valley sides formed by rocks of the Yoredale series, which is over 4kms across at its widest point just east of Hawes. It reaches from its boundary with Upper Wensleydale at Mossdale Head to Bainbridge where it has a less well defined boundary with Lower Wensleydale. To the north is Abbotside Common and Stags Fell and to the south, Mossdale Moor, Burtersett High Pasture and Yorburgh. Views are extensive due to the openness of the valley; the flat topped conical form of Addlebrough dominate the skyline to the south.

The valley floor is very broad with a rolling landscape of green fields and scattered clumps of trees. This part of the valley is important for unusual glacial features known as drift tails, mounds of glacial till narrowing to tails which point downstream. They are responsible for the formation of Hardraw Force by the deflection of Fossdale Gill and Cotter Force by diversion of Cotterdale Beck. At Brown Moor a terminal moraine crosses the valley floor at one time creating a dam across the river impounding a glacial lake, responsible for the flat floodplain around Hawes and Burtersett. The knolls north east of Hawes create a distinctive hummocky landscape and combined with the small clumps of trees on top form an important feature of this area.

The valley sides are stepped unevenly in profile with sloping areas interspersed by bands of outcropping limestone rock. High Clint and Low Clint, the largely unvegetated scars on the northern upper valley side, are important visual elements. Scrubby vegetation and scattered trees occur until midway up the slopes leaving the crest of the valley open. Minor gills with their own waterfalls start high up on the valley sides, disappearing and reappearing a number of times; however these are generally not a strong visual feature when viewed from the valley.

The River Ure is broad and meandering with a stony channel and low grassy banks with a few scattered trees. It is not an obvious feature, often hidden by the undulating topography of the valley floor. It has five main tributaries, Hardraw Beck, Cotterdale Beck, Widdale Beck, Gayle Beck and the River Bain, the valleys of the latter four forming the character areas Cotterdale, Widdale, Sleddale and Raydale.

Sparse vegetation cover comprises of small mixed woodland blocks, scattered copses and trees in clumps across the valley floor, on top of hillocks and on the lower valley slopes. Scrub and scree occur higher up valley sides. Some areas are open and exposed with very little vegetation.

The field pattern is a strong element picked out by stone walls in generally good condition across the valley. Barns are a relatively strong element generally being situated on the field boundaries. Around Hawes the fields are small in size, creating a more intimate feel, becoming larger and more irregular higher up the valley sides and elsewhere in Mid Wensleydale. The majority of pastures are improved although hay meadows are well represented within this part of the dale.

There is one major road through the valley, the A684 which links from west to east, Appersett, Hawes and Bainbridge on the south side of the River Ure. To the north of the river there is a linear minor road partway up the valley side linking Hardraw and Sedbusk eventually with Askrigg to the east. Cam High Road, an old Roman road, joins the Roman fort at Bainbridge with Ingleton crossing the south east corner of Mid Wensleydale to cross the top of Wether Fell.

The Pennine Way crosses Mid Wensleydale from the lower reaches of Sleddale through Hawes to Hardraw continuing northwards up towards Great Shunner Fell. There are also many other footpaths that traverse the valley sides following the level terraces, and others that cross the valley floor to climb the slopes and connect with the moorland tops beyond. The Yoredale Way, which links York to Kirkby Stephen, generally follows the River Ure through Mid Wensleydale. A dismantled railway has been partly given over to recreational usage as a footpath. The striking viaduct at Appersett crosses Widdale Beck and the associated riverside trees.

Hawes is the main settlement in Mid Wensleydale and the main town and tourist centre for the whole of Wensleydale. It has a National Park Visitor Centre, Dales Countryside Museum, and the Wensleydale Cheese Centre and many shops, guesthouses pubs and teashops. Other important villages are Hardraw, which, although small, receives a lot of visitors to its waterfall; Appersett; Gayle; Sedbusk and Burtersett. All of these are traditionally built with local stone and stone flagged roofs and generally follow the linear form typical of Wensleydale. There is evidence of modernisation and tourist pressures with many holiday cottages and Bed and Breakfast establishments. The farmhouses scattered throughout the valley tend to be longhouses of traditional construction.

Detractors in Mid Wensleydale include the few large agricultural sheds and many disused quarries located high up on the valley slopes. There are five caravan/camp sites generally located fairly close to the River Ure on sites that are visible from the main A684 road, which may become intrusive during busy periods.

10. Lower Wensleydale

+ Key Characteristics

- Very broad, large scale, open u-shaped glacial valley, overlying Great Scar limestone and with valley sides formed by rocks of the Yoredale series, forming the lower reaches of Wensleydale.
- Distinctive stepped valley side profile. Horizontal banded stepped outcrops of rocks combined with strips of woodland and screes are a strong visual feature on both sides of the valley.
- Hummocky valley floor with moraines and drumlins give small-scale local enclosure within the valley.
- Wide, gently meandering river, dropping significantly in height east of Aysgarth, with platformed waterfalls forming focal points along its course. Generally wooded and relatively hidden from view within the wider context of the valley.
- Two significant tributary valleys with their own distinctive characters (Bishopdale and Waldendale). The many smaller tributary gills become insignificant within the overall scale of the valley.
- Extensive vegetation generally concentrated on lower valley side slopes and valley floor. Copses and scattered trees on top of hillocks, trees associated with the river, and strong horizontal bands of woodland associated with limestone scars mid-way up the valley sides.
- Strong parkland character at eastern end of the dale with roadside trees a feature of this area.
- Several major villages with distinctive, linear form, constructed from local stone with stone flag roofs. Evidence of infill with modern styles, rendering and gentrification.
- Strong tourism element with provision of Bed and Breakfast establishments, teashops, holiday cottages and car/coach parks.
- Field pattern screened by rolling landform and vegetation varies considerably; generally smaller fields adjacent to settlements becoming larger and more irregular higher up the valley sides
- Field boundaries formed by a mixture of drystone walls and hedgerows and some post and wire fence infill. Generally screened by landform and vegetation, mostly improved pasture with large areas of hay meadows.
- Major tourist/historical attractions at Aysgarth Falls and Bolton Castle. Many other historical sites of interest within the area.
- Distant views of moorland tops to either side of the valley but not a strong influence due to grand scale of immediate river valley.

+ Landscape Character

Lower Wensleydale is a very broad, open, u-shaped valley overlying Great Scar limestone and with valley sides formed by rocks of the Yoredale series. At its broadest point it is over 4kms wide, briefly narrowing down to 2kms just west of Aysgarth. It has a flat wide floodplain and valley floor, and a distinctive stepped profile to the valley sides. Far reaching views are available from within the valley of the bare, open hilltops and moorland.

The valley is orientated from east to west with the character area boundary extending from Bainbridge in the west, where it merges with Mid Wensleydale, up to the edges of Askrigg Common and Carperby Moor to the north, to the National Park boundary in the east and to Thornton Rust Moor and West Witton Moor to the south.

The River Ure follows a sinuous course, crossing a number of spectacular and nationally renowned waterfalls at Aysgarth, High, Middle and Lower Force and at Force Scar further downstream. The river has well wooded banks that obscure it from view but whose meandering lines mark its presence within the valley floor. There are three main tributaries: the River Bain, Bishopdale Beck and Walden Beck, whose tributary valleys form the character areas Raydale, Bishopdale and Waldendale.

Apart from its sheer size and scale, the distinctive features of Lower Wensleydale include the smooth stepped valley side profiles and scars that run in pale coloured, horizontal bands along the dale sides. The scars are particularly pronounced from Askrigg and Bainbridge in the west to Aysgarth in the east, along both sides of the valley. Associated with these scars are bands of trees or woodland which help to emphasise their presence, the green leaves in summer contrasting with the pale grey limestone outcrops. The moorland tops are visible but views are distant due to the large scale of the valley.

North of Aysgarth the valley side vegetation character changes to scattered clumps of hawthorn and more scrubby bands of trees. The moorland tops are more visible here and slanted bands of outcropping rock are a feature of the valley side above large areas of scree.

There are many gills present up on the valley sides but these are small and become lost amongst the larger scale bands of limestone, which form more dominant horizontal elements within the dale.

The valley floor has a distinctive hummocky landform resulting from glacial deposition including valley floor moraines and drumlins. Small copses frequently mark the tops of the hillocks while larger blocks of woodland occur on the valley floor. Areas adjacent to Wanlass Park and Swinithwaite have a very strong parkland character, with large parkland trees close to the main road. Species include horse chestnut, oak and sycamore.

The field pattern is not a dominant element within Lower Wensleydale, becoming lost within the characteristic rolling landform and extensive vegetation cover. However, where the pattern is visible it is apparent that field sizes vary considerably, with the smaller fields generally being adjacent to settlements and larger ones higher up the valley sides. They also vary in shape from regular to irregular but are generally elongated up the valley slopes. Boundaries are defined by a mixture of hedgerows and stone walls, in varying condition, and timber fences replacing walls in disrepair. Most of the fields comprise improved pasture with large areas of flower-rich meadows concentrated on the valley floor around West Witton and in the upper dale. Strip lynchets feature locally on the valley sides.

The A684 runs through the valley, generally following the river, and linking the settlements of Bainbridge, Aysgarth and West Witton on the south side of the River Ure. North of the river is a minor road which links Askrigg, Carperby and Redmire and runs along the top of Nappa Scar. South of the A684 a further minor road runs along the top of Thornton Scar through the village of Thornton Rust. The line of the dismantled railway is visible just above the flood plan to the north.

There are numerous footpaths within the valley, including the Yoredale Way long distance footpath linking York with Kirkby Stephen and generally following the course of the River Ure. Other footpaths follow the linear, essentially level, horizontal scars that traverse the valley sides and allow good views across the valley. Other paths cross the valley floor and climb the valley sides to the moors beyond.

The main villages within Lower Wensleydale are Bainbridge, Askrigg, Aysgarth, Carperby and West Witton. They all have a very traditional linear form being constructed with local stone with stone flag roofs. However, there is some evidence of infill with modern housing styles, rendering and modernisation that detract from their traditional character. Castle Bolton, situated in a prominent position on the northern valley side, is a landmark feature of the lower dale. Tourist pressures are very evident with many teashops, Bed and Breakfast establishments, holiday cottages, and large car parks present. Other minor detractors include large farm sheds and overhead electricity lines.

11. Cotterdale

+ Key Characteristics

- Small, hidden and remote forked u-shaped valley overlying rocks of the Yoredale series, forming a northern tributary of Mid Wensleydale, dominated by adjacent moorland character.
- Narrow and steep-sided with an open flat valley floor, strongly contained by vegetation and topography and entirely enclosed by surrounding moorland which spills over onto valley sides.
- Shallow, stony, fast-flowing meandering beck, often walled, with grassy banks interrupted occasionally by clumps of trees.
- Limestone scars are a feature of the eastern valley crest; other smaller areas of exposed rock occur on the eastern valley sides.
- Two large coniferous plantations enclosing the northern valley sides are alien to the character of the dale but add to the strong sense of containment.
- Scattered tree cover, mainly associated with the beck and Cotterdale hamlet, interrupts the open valley floor and contrasts with the open and largely featureless south western valley slopes.
- Strong moorland influence, enhanced by distant views to the north of adjacent moor tops and moorland vegetation spilling over the valley sides often down to the valley floor.
- Cotterdale hamlet, located on the river banks at the head of the valley is unspoilt and traditional, constructed from local stone.
- The field pattern is almost entirely lost on the valley sides. On the valley floor, walls, constructed with local limestone, are largely intact. Fields here are small to medium sized and of a regular pattern enclosing a mixture of improved and rough pasture with sedges.
- The few barns are an important visual feature due to the very open nature of the valley floor.

+ Landscape Character

Cotterdale is a forked u-shaped tributary valley of the River Ure, drained by West Gill and East Gill, which become Cotterdale Beck below Cotterdale hamlet and which in turn joins the River Ure at Holme Head Bridge in Mid Wensleydale. It is a small, hidden dale, relatively narrow and steep sided, with a flat valley floor overlying rocks of the Yoredale series. Its strong sense of containment is enhanced by two large blocks of coniferous woodland to either side of the dale head. It is orientated in a north west to south east direction.

A very strong moorland influence prevails throughout the valley, with moorland vegetation spilling over the valley sides often down to the valley floor. High up on the eastern crest of the valley is a rocky outcrop known as Bends Clints, visible as a pale grey band on the horizon. Scattered areas of outcropping rock occur elsewhere on the eastern valley side.

The flat river floodplain, in sharp contrast to the steep valley sides, would appear to have been formed by a post glacial lake held back by the higher ground formed by glacial deposition at the mouth of the valley. The valley floor is mainly grazed by sheep comprising a mixture of improved and rough pasture with areas of sedges and a very few hay meadows.

Cotterdale Beck is shallow and fast-flowing with grassy banks interrupted by occasional clumps of trees and a stony bed often enclosed by drystone walls.

The field pattern has been almost entirely lost on the valley sides where walls are crumbling into decay. In contrast, on the valley floor, walls, constructed in local limestone, are largely intact. Fields

here are small to medium sized and of a regular pattern. The few barns that are present on the valley floor are an important visual feature due to the very open nature of the valley floor.

Cotterdale hamlet is a very small, traditional, unspoilt linear settlement strung out along the open banks of East Gill and comprising a few cottages and farmsteads. Although there are one or two holiday cottages and a Bed and Breakfast guesthouse there are few visual signs of gentrification or modernisation, giving the hamlet a sense of timelessness. East Gill, flowing over stones and boulders alongside the houses, contributes significantly to the character of the hamlet.

The valley is nestled in isolation within the surrounding moorland with distant views of moorland to the north framed by the two coniferous plantations on either side of the valley. The only road which enters the valley from the south is the very minor road that ends at Cotterdale hamlet.

There are a few footpaths that traverse the valley sides crossing the shallow rivers at various points without the need for footbridges. Two footpaths starting on the valley floor climb up the eastern valley side to link eventually with the Pennine Way approximately 1km to the east.

Detractors are limited to the areas of coniferous woodland on the upper valley sides and occasional areas of post and wire fencing.

12. Widdale

+ Key Characteristics

- Small, shallow-sloped u-shaped tributary valley of Mid Wensleydale with undulating valley floor, joined by significant tributary valley drained by Snaizeholme Beck, overlying rocks of the Yoredale series.
- Quiet, small and elevated dale with little sense of enclosure, strongly influenced by adjacent areas of moorland.
- Becks often hidden within the steeply incised or undulating valley floor, marked by occasional trees lining the riverbanks. Many gills, well defined to the east by their associated trees and woodland.
- Large coniferous plantations contain the head of the Widdale and its tributary valley have a negative, dominating presence.
- Trees line the riverbanks and a few planted blocks of mixed woodland occur within the dale.
- The dale is quiet and little trafficked. Settlement limited to scattered traditional farmsteads; little evidence of tourist pressures.
- Undulating topography dilutes the visual impact of drystone walls and field patterns. Field sizes are medium to large and irregular enclosing mainly improved pasture, hay meadows being almost completely absent from the dale.

+ Landscape Character

Widdale is a u-shaped valley, overlying rocks of the Yoredale series, situated to the south west of Mid Wensleydale at the foot of Widdale Fell. At Snaizeholme Bridge it is joined by the tributary valley drained by Snaizeholme Beck. Widdale Beck joins the River Ure at Appersett within Mid Wensleydale.

Although small and narrow by comparison to other dales, a sense of breadth is conveyed by the broad shallow valley sides, although the valley floor is very narrow in places with the beck steeply incised and hidden from view especially in its lower reaches. In its upper reaches the valley floor is hummocky and both rivers meander through the undulating topography with the result that they are often hidden from view, marked only by a line of trees. A line of shakeholes lines the valley side within the lower part of the dale.

The valley is elevated and strongly influenced by the adjacent areas of moorland. Moorland vegetation extends over the crest of the valley almost down to the valley floor in parts. The dale has little sense of enclosure except at the head of Widdale and its tributary valley where several large coniferous plantations form strong visual limits to the southern boundaries of the character area.

Trees line the riverbanks and a few planted blocks of mixed woodland occur within the dale particularly at Widdale Foot and on Widdale Side; species include ash, rowan, sycamore and alder. A significant area of planted woodland surrounds the piggery close to Widdale Bridge. The gills on the eastern valley side are also marked by lines of trees and woodland. The gills on the western valley side are much more open with the exception of Widdale Foot, which is very well wooded.

Field patterns are not a dominant feature within Widdale, their impact diluted by the undulating valley floor topography. Field sizes are medium to large and irregular enclosing mainly improved pasture, hay meadows being almost completely absent from the dale. Walls are mainly intact although crumbling in places, however, there is evidence of wall repairs being carried out.

Settlements within the valley are limited to scattered traditional farmsteads which tend to be sited on the lower east facing valley sides or on the riversides. There is little evidence of provision for tourists or holiday makers.

The dale is quiet and little trafficked. There is one main road running through the valley, the relatively broad B6255, an old turnpike road running from Hawes to Ribbleshead approximately 11km further south west. Farmsteads are served by access tracks off the main road. The tributary valley is served by a dead end minor road running along the upper eastern valley side. Two attractive stone bridges, Widdale Bridge and Snaizeholme Bridge, provide points of interest within the valley.

13. Sleddale

+ Key Characteristics

- Broad elevated open and relatively shallow-sided u-shaped glacial tributary valley of Mid Wensleydale, overlying rocks of the Yoredale series.
- Narrow flat valley floor with gently undulating lower valley slopes, the valley form a key visual feature due to open character.
- Strongly influenced by the moorland which surrounds the dale.
- Meandering, shallow, stony beck notched into the valley floor and therefore only visible from higher up the valley sides. Many unwooded gills, particularly on the eastern side of the valley.
- Almost entirely unwooded with the exception of a few isolated woodland blocks.
- Very few buildings located within the valley. Two farmsteads are a focal point at the head of the valley; in the lower dale farmsteads are slightly more frequent and field barns are a prominent feature of the open, lower valley sides.
- A regular pattern of large stone walled enclosures contain mainly rough pasture in the upper dale and areas reverting to moorland vegetation. In the lower dale much of the valley floor and lower slopes are given over to improved pasture, there being very few hay meadows.
- Parallel lines of walls sweep down the valley sides forming mainly rectangular fields, the pattern reinforcing the shallow, broad, open feel of the valley.
- Detractors, including remnants of mining industry, agricultural sheds and electricity poles highly visible within open landscape.

+ Landscape Character

Sleddale is a broad, relatively shallow-sided u-shaped tributary valley of Wensleydale drained by Gayle Beck, which joins the River Ure just north of Hawes. It is underlain by rocks of the Yoredale series. The valley is open and almost entirely unwooded and strongly influenced by the moorland which surrounds the dale. Areas of moorland vegetation creep down the valley sides; this appears to be a marginal agricultural area which is slowly reverting back to moorland.

Aligned from north east to south west, the dale is contained at its southern end by the moorland below Dodd Fell and to the east and west by Wether Fell Side and Rottenstone Hill. The northern limits of the character area boundary lie just south of Gayle where it merges into Mid Wensleydale.

The valley floor is narrow and flat and the lower side slopes gently undulating. The river, Gayle Beck, has no obvious presence and is only apparent from higher up the valley sides as it is notched into the valley floor, particularly in its lower reaches where it is also fringed by trees. It forms a gently meandering, shallow, stony channel with rough grass banks. In its lower reaches Gayle Beck crosses Aysgill Force, hidden by the steep valley sides in this location.

There are a very few small woodland blocks scattered along the valley sides and along Gayle Beck in its lower reaches; the many gills on both sides of the valley are unwooded.

A regular pattern of large stone walled enclosures contain mainly rough pasture in the upper dale with large areas of sedges and areas reverting to moorland vegetation. In the lower dale much of the valley floor and lower slopes are given over to improved pasture, there being very few hay meadows. Parallel lines of walls sweep down the valley sides forming mainly rectangular fields, the pattern reinforcing the shallow, broad, open feel of the valley. Some of the walls are crumbling; in places post and wire fencing runs along the wall tops reducing their visual appeal.

The dale is served by a minor lane, Beggarmans Lane, which runs from Gayle along the contours of the eastern valley side in the lower dale, rising up the valley side at the dale head to join the Roman road, the Cam High Road.

There are very few buildings within the valley; two farmsteads (Duerley Farm and Duerley Bottom) are a focal point of the dale head, where an agricultural shed and electricity poles stand out within the open landscape. In the lower dale farmsteads are slightly more frequent and field barns are a prominent feature of the open, lower valley sides, whilst the upper eastern valley sides are marked by a number of small disused quarries. At the head of the valley small mounds of spoil are all that remains of former small scale coal workings (Storth Colliery), clearly visible on the open valley sides.

14. Raydale

+ Key Characteristics

- Broad, flat-bottomed u-shaped tributary valley of Mid Wensleydale overlying Great Scar limestone and with valley sides formed by rocks of the Yoredale series and containing a large lake of glacial origin.
- Wide, flat valley floor with distinctive stepped profile to the valley sides, enclosed and separated from Wensleydale by the ridge of higher land to the north of Countesett, dominated by the view of Addlebrough to the north.
- Bands of scree, evident at the valley crest, combine with terraces and areas of woodland to form distinctive horizontal lines traversing the valley slopes.
- The valley has a wooded character, being distinctive for the scattered tree clumps and overmature hedgerow trees that form strong parallel lines across the valley floor. Most of the tree cover is associated with the rivers with a significant area of woodland scrub adjacent to Semer Water. Large coniferous plantation forms a dark, visual stop at the head of the valley.
- Valley side gills are evident from the valley floor by the tree cover that serves to highlight their location and form.
- Strong pattern of walls and hedgerows, walls following the horizontal form of the terraces or crossing the slope at right angles giving emphasis to the stepped topography.
- Field sizes vary from small to medium on the valley floor, the smallest fields concentrated around settlements, to the large regular pattern of the enclosure period high up on the valley side, a pattern which extends onto the moorland beyond.
- Significant areas of flower-rich hay meadows around Semer Water, elsewhere pastures are mainly improved.
- Stone field barns an important visual feature.
- Traditional unspoilt nucleated hamlets on lower valley side locations.
- Recreational pressures associated with lake do not significantly detract although associated car parking areas and camp site have a visual impact.
- Semer Water combines with extensive vegetation cover to create a self-contained dale of tranquil, secluded character.

+ Landscape Character

Raydale is a broad, flat-bottomed u-shaped tributary valley which enters Wensleydale from the south. It is underlain by Great Scar limestone and the valley sides are formed by rocks of the Yoredale series. The dale is unique in that it contains Semer Water, one of the largest natural lakes of glacial origin in Yorkshire, retained by a terminal moraine of boulder clay that forms a natural dam in the lower reaches of the valley. It is characterised by a broad, flat valley floor with gently sloping terraced valley sides.

The character area extends high up both valley sides and the adjoining moorland exerts only a very minor influence. At the dale head the influence of the moors is stronger and moorland vegetation spills over the tops and partway down the valley slopes. At the northern end of Raydale, just north of Countersett, a ridge extends from Wether Fell to the west to form a natural division between Raydale and Mid Wensleydale. To the east the valley gently steps up to Cragdale Moor, Thoraby Common

and Addlebrough. To the south, the large coniferous plantation south of Raydale House forms a very dominant visual stop to the head of the valley.

The whole of Raydale is dominated visually by the view to Addlebrough to the north east, with its pronounced platform top and sharply sloping face. Views back into Wensleydale are restricted by the landform that serves to contain Raydale so well. The tarn, Semer Water, reinforces the sense of a secluded and tranquil 'oasis' set within the surrounding moors that can be seen at the crest of the valley.

Just below the hamlet of Stalling Busk, three becks converge, namely Marsett Beck, Raydale Beck and Cragdale Water, to become Crooks Beck which in turn flows into Semer Water. From Semer Water emerges the River Bain which joins the River Ure just north of Bainbridge. Each of the becks is fairly wide and gently meandering but are of secondary importance to Semer Water in terms of visual interest and contribution to the overall character of the valley.

The valley sides have the distinctive stepped profile associated with the Yoredale series of terraces interspersed by gentler slopes. Areas of scree are a feature of the upper western valley side. Valley side gills are evident from the valley floor by the tree cover that serves to highlight their location and form. Numerous waterfalls occur, particularly on the eastern valley side, but are mostly hidden by the vegetation that lines the gills. Near the head of the valley, one of the gills has been planted with trees to mimic the naturally occurring vegetation pattern.

The valley has a wooded character, being distinctive for the scattered tree clumps and overmature hedgerow trees that form strong parallel lines across the valley floor. Most of the tree cover is associated with the rivers with a significant area of woodland scrub adjacent to Semer Water. Marsett Lane is lined with mature trees for much of its length. On the valley sides, wooded gills cross the line of the slope; elsewhere tree cover tends to follow the line of the contours. Dominant species throughout the valley include sycamore, ash and hawthorn with some oak and willow.

The stone wall pattern is influenced by valley side topography. Walls follow the horizontal form of the terraces or cross the slope at right angles giving emphasis to the stepped topography. The condition of the walls within the dale is a mixture of both intact and crumbling. At the time of survey wall repairs were being carried out, although where sections of wall had completely disappeared post and wire fences had replaced them. Field sizes vary from small to medium on the valley floor, the smallest fields concentrated around settlements, to the large regular pattern of the enclosure period high up on the valley side, a pattern which extends onto the moorland beyond. There are significant areas of flower-rich hay meadows around Semer Water, elsewhere pastures are mainly improved.

Stone barns are an important visual feature, which appear particularly prominent when viewed up the valley towards Raydale Plantation at its head. Viewed from the opposite direction they are frequently screened by trees and old hedgerow lines.

Raydale is well served by two minor roads leading into the valley from Wensleydale, although they both terminate within the valley reinforcing its sense of seclusion. There are a few footpaths, several leading up the western valley side to link with Cam High Road, the old Roman Road that crosses Wether Fell from Bainbridge. The footpaths on the eastern side of the valley are more concentrated around Semer Water and the hamlet of Stalling Busk.

There are three main settlements within Raydale, the hamlets of Countersett, Marsett and Stalling Busk. All three settlements are very traditional and unspoilt, inward facing and with little outward evidence of gentrification or tourist pressures.

Semer Water is the most dominant visual element of the valley. It is an important tourist attraction; recreational activities include windsurfing, speed boating/water-skiing and fishing. A car park caters for tourists and a small caravan park located at Carr End Farm, adjacent to the road and in an exposed position above the lake, has the potential to be visually intrusive. Other detractors include overhead electricity lines.

15. Bishopdale

+ Key Characteristics

- Long, fairly narrow and deep low-lying u-shaped tributary valley of Lower Wensleydale overlying Great Scar limestone and with valley sides formed by rocks of the Yoredale series.
- Steeply sloping valley sides in lower dale becoming shallower and more open in character towards the dale head where there is a narrow valley floor.
- Small amount of outcropping rock mainly located at the head of the valley.
- Beck has many tributary streams meeting midway along the dale to form Bishopdale Beck. Meandering with a stony channel and well screened by associated vegetation, the beck is not an obvious feature of the dale.
- Frequent parallel springs and gills occur high up the valley sides particularly to the south east, marked by the lines of trees and woodland.
- Extensive scattered woodland blocks, groups of trees and hedgerows form strong linear pattern across valley floor reaching mid-way up valley sides.
- Strong, parkland character to the valley floor around Ribba Hall and the Rookery.
- Settlements are scattered and elongated with traditional, unspoilt local stone buildings, located at the lower end of the valley.
- Hedgerows and trees rather than stone walls define many of the field boundaries. Large fields, square-shaped, enclosed by crumbling walls and hedgerows, extend along the valley floor and part-way up the valley sides where they gradually become larger in size.
- Pastures are mainly improved although there is a concentration of hay meadows in the upper dale and south of West Burton.

+ Landscape Character

Bishopdale is a long deep low-lying u-shaped glacial tributary valley of Lower Wensleydale, overlying Great Scar limestone and with valley sides formed by rocks of the Yoredale series, orientated north east to south west.

The character area boundary extends northward to protrude into Lower Wensleydale almost as far as Aysgarth. It is bounded on the south east by a ridge extending from Naughtberry Hill between Bishopdale and nearby Waldendale. Thoraby Haw and Thoraby Common form the north western boundary. At the south western end of the dale the B6160 to Cray in Wharfedale climbs up out of the valley, up Kidstones Bank adjacent to Kidstones Fell and the character area boundary concludes at Dale Head/Bishopdale Head where the land cover is predominantly moorland vegetation.

The dale has steeply sloping valley sides that become shallower and more open halfway along the valley towards the dale head with a narrow valley floor. There is a small amount of exposed, outcropping rock midway up the south eastern valley side in the Woods Plantation area, and distinctive narrow banded wooded scars occur opposite on the lower western valley side. High Scar is evident at the crest of the valley on the opposite side.

Bishopdale Beck is very meandering and formed by the meeting of several tributary streams about halfway along the dale, including Kidstones Beck, arising at Bishopdale Head. The beck has a stony channel and is well screened by adjacent vegetation and is not an obvious feature of the valley. Frequent parallel springs and gills occur high up the valley sides particularly to the south east, marked

by the lines of trees and woodland. The valley floor is particularly flat in the middle reaches of Bishopdale and is prone to extensive flooding, particularly in Winter.

Scattered woodland, mixed and deciduous plantations and groups of trees contribute to the well treed appearance of the valley floor and lower to mid valley sides. Hedgerows and trees rather than stone walls define the majority of the field boundaries. There is evidence of old hedgerow banks along Bishopdale Lane. The lines of trees that cross the valley floor and creep up the valley sides form a strong linear pattern and are a distinctive element of the valley's character. Around Ribba Hall and the Rookery there is a strong, parkland character to the valley floor.

Field sizes are generally large and square-shaped with noticeable gaps in the wall and hedgerow boundaries. Many crumbling walls in need of repair have been replaced by hedgerows. Walls and barns do not feature prominently in this area as where they occur they are frequently screened by the abundant hedgerows and trees. Pastures are mainly improved although there is a concentration of hay meadows in the upper dale and south of West Burton. Limited areas of rough pasture is evident at the valley crest where the moorland vegetation is more prevalent.

Bishopdale has one main road; the B6160, which cuts through the valley in a straight line providing the main access for the farmsteads situated on the lower valley sides. There are three settlements in the lower dale: Thoraby, West Burton and Newbiggin, each scattered villages with traditional, unspoilt buildings. West Burton is situated around a large village green, which was formerly used for fairs, and features a stepped stone spire erected in 1820. There is limited evidence of lynchets, the result of medieval arable farming, on hillsides nearby.

Near Newbiggin there is a caravan/camp site that is very well screened by adjacent vegetation. Other minor detractors include electricity poles and overhead lines; however, these are easily absorbed within the well-treed valley landscape.

16. Waldendale

+ Key Characteristics

- Narrow fluvial v-shaped valley, overlying Great Scar limestone and with valley sides formed by rocks of the Yoredale series, which widens out to a u-shaped profile towards the head of the dale.
- Gently undulating, stepped valley sides extending down to the river until over halfway along the dale where valley floor widens out.
- Stepped bands of outcropping rock and associated scree forms part of the valley slope terraces. Dove Scar is a dominant focal point.
- River is not visible at first due to topography but becomes an important feature where valley floor widens, with visible stony, shallow channel, stony beaches and low grassy banks. Areas of dry riverbed present towards the head of the dale.
- Many tributary gills giving a folded appearance to the valley side although not easily discernible due to very little associated tree cover.
- Visually prominent, large coniferous plantation situated at the northern end of the dale high up on the valley side contrasts with other clumps of broad-leaved woodland situated mainly adjacent to the river and on lower valley slopes.
- Scattered farmhouses and cottages in long house or laithe style, mainly situated adjacent to the road, or river, on the lower valley slopes, or valley floor. Some evidence of modernisation and conversion to holiday cottages.
- Drystone walls form a strong pattern particularly where v-shape profile is more pronounced, forming significant parallel lines down the slopes petering out where the valley widens towards the dale head. Occasional scattered barns mainly built into walls or on field boundaries.
- Predominantly improved pasture with a small concentration of hay meadows in the upper dale. Moorland vegetation visible only at crest of valley and more predominantly at the head of the dale.
- Agricultural sheds are major visual detractors situated halfway up valley slope in visually prominent positions.
- Long distance views of elements within Wensleydale are a positive feature, framed by characteristic stepped landform to the north east.

+ Landscape Character

Waldendale is a long and narrow dale with a curved form, overlying Great Scar limestone and with valley sides formed by rocks of the Yoredale series, orientated north to south west. Waldendale differs from the other tributary valleys of Wensleydale in that it is a v-shaped valley shaped by fluvial processes rather than glacial action.

The character area is defined by the ridged landform to the south of West Burton at the northern end. To the east lie Harland Hill, Denmans Hill and Brownhaw with Coverdale beyond. To the west is Naughtberry Hill positioned between Waldendale and Bishopdale. At the head of the valley is Walden Moor.

The dale has steeply shelving valley sides with pronounced terraces midway up the valley sides including stepped bands of outcropping rock and scree, particularly noticeable at the dale head and on the eastern valley side at Dove Scar and Scar Folds. The numerous swallowholes and shakeholes that occur on the valley sides are not discernible from within the valley floor. At the head of the dale the valley bottom widens into a narrow flat valley floor. There are significant long distance

views from the lower reaches of Waldendale to Castle Bolton and adjoining areas of Lower Wensleydale. The stepped outline of Height of Hazely to the north east serves to frame the views out of the lower end of this valley.

The dale is drained by Walden Beck, which has its source on Walden Moor. The beck is gently meandering, with stones and boulders in the channel, stony beaches and grassy banks. The beck is barely visible from the valley sides at the northern end of the dale due to the steep v-shape topography of the valley, but becomes a more important feature at the dale head where the valley floor widens out. Near the head of the valley the riverbed is dry in places. Gills are an infrequent feature of the lower dale becoming more prevalent in the upper valley where they are open and unwooded giving the valley sides a folded appearance.

There is one large coniferous plantation at Burton Pasture on the upper western valley side within the lower dale which is a dark, prominent visual feature. Other woodland clumps are broad-leaved and associated with the river and scars on the upper valley sides. Scattered trees and hedgerow remnants occur along the field boundaries; species include ash, hawthorn and rose.

There is a small concentration of hay meadows in the upper dale; elsewhere the valley bottom and western valley sides are mainly improved pasture while rough pasture is prevalent on the upper eastern valley side. Moorland influences are strong at the head of the dale where moorland vegetation spills over the valley sides and Waldendale gradually blends into Walden Moor beyond.

Stone walls form a strong pattern of parallel lines running down the steep valley sides, particularly where the valley v-shape is most pronounced. Wall condition is quite good. At the head of the valley post and wire fencing is run along the tops of walls to help contain stock. Occasional barns, sited mainly on field boundaries or built into the walls, are not a dominant visual element.

A straight minor road runs along the western valley side from West Burton into Waldendale, terminating at Walden Head. A second minor road branches off this road to the south of West Burton and runs along the eastern valley side to Nell Bank.

Settlements within Waldendale are limited to scattered farmsteads (often longhouses) and cottages situated adjacent to the road, or river, or a short way down an access track. The dale has limited evidence of property modernisation and gentrification and a few holiday cottages.

The agricultural sheds situated half way up the eastern valley side at Whiterow Farm detract from the valley character. Electricity poles are generally well contained within the steeply graded landform and are not a significant detractor.

17. Coverdale

+ Key Characteristics

- Long, sinuous u-shaped glacial valley overlying Great Scar limestone and with valley sides formed by rocks of the Yoredale series, forming a large tributary valley of Lower Wensleydale.
- Enclosed, narrow profile with steeply sloping sides at the head of the dale widening out to a broad profile, with gently undulating landform in the lower reaches.
- Frequent steep wooded parallel gills are a very marked feature particularly at the dale head reducing in steepness towards the lower reaches of the valley.
- River gently meanders with stony channel, stony beaches and low banks with side terraces. Extensive tree cover adjacent to the river.
- Green and well treed, tree cover being mostly associated with the river, valley side gills and field boundaries. Tree cover tends to be concentrated on the valley floor and extends up the valley sides in a marked linear pattern following gills or field boundaries and petering out at the top of the valley side to leave the crest of the valley bare.
- Field boundaries, enclosing mostly improved pasture picked out by trees; drystone walls are present but not a marked feature as they are often hidden by tree cover. Hedgerows and post and wire fences become more frequent in the lower dale.
- The lower end of the valley has a strong parkland character.
- Populous valley with a number of traditionally constructed linear villages, hamlets and scattered farmhouses, concentrated in the lower dale.
- Three main settlements situated in the centre of the dale partway up the valley slopes on either side of the river, all traditional, constructed with local stone with evidence of modernisation and conversion to holiday homes. Numerous other hamlets and farmhouses situated close to the valley floor on both sides of the river.
- Strong contrast between soft wooded green character of the dale and the bare open expanses of the adjacent moorland. Dale becomes increasingly open and wild with elevation.
- Several sites of historical interest within the valley.

+ Landscape Character

Coverdale is a long sinuous u-shaped valley overlying Great Scar limestone and with valley sides formed by rocks of the Yoredale series, orientated south west to north east, and the largest of Wensleydale's tributary valleys. At the head of the dale the valley is wilder and enclosed with a more v-shaped profile which broadens significantly in its lower reaches where it blends into the grand, wide open, softer landscape of Lower Wensleydale. At the head of the valley the narrow valley floor and steep valley sides contribute to a strong sense of enclosure. From Carlton northwards the landscape becomes more open with a gentle, rolling topography and very gently stepped valley sides. To the east land rises to West Scafton Moor and Little Whernside; to the west to Carlton Moor/Harland Hill and Woodale Moor.

A major feature of the valley sides are the numerous and distinctive parallel gills, marked by parallel lines of tree cover, many of which contain hidden waterfalls, which are a particularly strong characteristic of the dale head.

The River Cover is gently meandering with a stony channel, stony beaches and low banks with side terraces. A tributary stream, Turn Beck, has its own minor valley culminating at Fleensop. The River Cover joins the River Ure further downstream at Ulshaw, which is beyond the National Park boundary.

Coverdale is very green and well treed, tree cover being mostly associated with the river, valley side gills and field boundaries. There is a striking contrast between the lush green well wooded character and open character of the adjacent moorlands. Tree cover tends to be concentrated on the valley floor and extends up the valley sides in a marked linear pattern following gills or field boundaries and petering out at the top of the valley side to leave the crest of the valley bare. Species include sycamore, ash, hawthorn, oak, holly, rose and elder.

The field boundaries are picked out by trees rather than by walls. Although walls are present they are not a strong component of the dale character and are made up of mixed stone types. Barns are present but are often hidden amongst trees. At the northern end of the dale near Melmerby the wall pattern has almost disappeared, being replaced by a mixture of post and wire fences and hedgerows. From Coverham towards the Braithwaite Hall area high roadside hedgerows become a feature. Around this area, and also around Hindlethwaite Hall and Coverham Abbey, there is a strong parkland character to the landscape. Strip lynchets are a feature of the steeper riverside areas, for example below West Scafton.

Farmland is mostly improved pasture with a few flower rich hay meadows in the valley bottom and on the lower valley sides. At Carlton there is a small area of arable farmland.

There are a number of minor roads entering the lower dale from Wensleydale. In the upper dale a single minor road links to Horsehouse and Woodale, leaving Coverdale at the dale head to cross the moors to Kettlewell in Wharfedale.

Coverdale is the most populous of Wensleydale's tributaries. There are three main villages: Carlton, West Scafton and Melmerby, which are all situated in the mid to lower reaches of the dale. They are all traditional villages built with local stone, although some buildings have been affected by modernisation and extension. Holiday cottages are also evident. There are numerous hamlets and farmhouses scattered throughout the valley adjacent to the roads or river on the valley floor or on the lower to mid valley sides. Agricultural sheds and overhead electricity poles detract from landscape character, particularly at the more open dale head.

Within lower Coverdale a number of sites of historic interest including a Round Hill Motte at Carlton and Coverham Abbey. The National Trust owns the land around Braithwaite Hall. The Forbidden Corner, a folly near Coverham attracts visitors and a certain amount of traffic in the lower dale and is visible as a terraced garden from the opposite valley side.