# AYSGARTH FALLS AND WOODLAND TRAIL

## A GUIDE FOR GROUP LEADERS

**Starting Point:** Aysgarth Falls National Park Centre

**Distance:** About 1½ kilometres

**Time required:** About 1 hour

**Terrain:** Easy walking along woodland footpaths

Disabled Access: Much of the trail follows a wide, surfaced footpath and is suitable for wheelchairs. For those wheelchairs user used to travelling over rough terrain, access to the Lower Falls (stop 7) is also possible but strenuous. There are toilet facilities for the disabled at the National Park Centre.

**Dramatic Falls and fine woods**

The Aysgarth Falls area is one of the most visited locations in the Yorkshire Dales National Park. It contains some of the Park's most dramatic waterfalls and some of its finest woodland.

The Middle and Lower Falls form part of the well known Aysgarth Falls system on the River Ure. On the north bank of the river 13 hectares of broad-leaved woodland make up Freeholders Wood, home to a wide range of plants and animals.

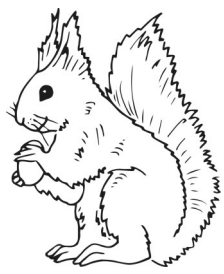
Prior to 1982 Freeholders Wood had not been effectively managed, and the huge number of visitors had caused severe trampling damage. In that year the wood was bought by the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority to improve access to the waterfalls and safeguard the important natural history of the site. Since then a good surfaced path has been laid to the Middle and Lower falls and platforms built to provide the best views of the cascades. Freeholders Wood itself is now being managed by the Authority to protect its natural history and beauty.
This trail provides an introduction to the management and natural history of Freeholders Wood, and guides you through the woodland to the best places to view the Middle and Lower Falls.

**The future beauty of Freeholders Wood depends on your co-operation.**

**Please:**

- **Keep to the surfaced path and avoid trampling the woodland plants.**
- **Do not pick or uproot wild plants. They are all protected under the Wildlife and Country-side Act 1981.**
- **Take your litter home.**

**Keep dogs under close control.**



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**Route**

The trail begins at Aysgarth National Park Centre. From the centre, leave the car park by the main entrance and follow the fenced path down the road. Cross the road where the fence ends to enter the wood. From there on follow the route shown on the map. The trail stops are indicated on the ground by numbered posts.

**Stop 1: Freeholders Wood**

Freeholders Wood lies before you. The wood is termed ancient woodland, which means it has had a tree cover since 1600 at least. Many species of plant have had time to colonise the site.

Thick hazel dominates much of the wood. Other trees to look out for include ash, elm, rowan, birch, holly, wild cherry and bird cherry. Many mammals and birds make their home in the wood. Roe deer, grey squirrel, wood mouse, and shrew may be seen and birds include nuthatch, chaffinch, tree creeper, and various warblers.

A variety of flora makes up a colourful floor in parts of the wood. This comes to life in April when wood anemone, primrose and violet begin to flower. Slightly later bluebell, ramsons and early purple orchid add their colours to the wood.

During May the trees put forth new leaves and birds nest in the thick scrub. Ash is one of the latest trees to awake from the winter and often doesn't attain full leaf coverage until well into June.

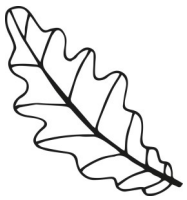
Throughout the summer the wood is busy with the activities of insects, birds and mammals. In the late summer fruits begin to ripen. Rowan and wild cherry become heavy with their bright berries and hazel trees are loaded with nut clusters.

Towards the end of September leaves begin to fall, announcing the oncoming winter. At the same time a wide variety of fungi some good to eat others deadly poisonous, dot the damp woodland floor. Evidence of grey squirrel and dormouse activity may be seen: nuts lie broken open or gnawed. The nuthatch may also be seen wedging nuts into crevices of tree bark and cracking them open with its beak.

**Stop 2: Middle Falls**

The Middle Falls are best seen from the riverside viewing platform reached from the main path by a flight of steps. For those in wheelchairs a fine view may be enjoyed from the top of the steps. The falls are one of the three main waterfalls at Aysgarth. They all owe their existence to the arrangement of the underlying rocks. The rock ledges forming the waterfalls are made up of near-horizontal layers of limestone, separated by thin bands of shale. These rocks – geologically part of the Yoredale Series – were laid down as sediments on a sea floor over 300 million years ago. The limestone is made up of the shells and skeletons of a multitude of tiny sea creatures. At the time it was formed the Aysgarth area was enjoying a Caribbean-type climate and a shallow tropical sea covered the area.

Subsequent earth movements have raised the rock to form dry land. The alternation of near-horizontal layers of hard limestone and soft shale has produced the waterfalls.



At this point the floor of upper Wensleydale drops about 50 metres into lower Wensleydale and Bishopdale. The swirling waters of the Ure have cut back into the shale bands undercutting the limestone above. Limestone blocks have broken off creating the steps seen today. Each waterfall at Aysgarth is slowly being pushed backwards by erosion leaving a deepened gorge in front of it.

**Stop 3: Mature coppice**

Around you the wood is thick and made up of rather elderly trees. The hazel can be identified by its broad, light green leaves and in late winter by its catkins. The thick canopy lets little light through to the ground. On the woodland floor, the shade-loving perennial dog's mercury dominates at this point.

The thick cover is favoured by nesting birds, and roe deer and other mammals find shelter here. For a wood to be of maximum conservation value, ie contain the greatest number of plant and animal species, there needs to be a range of habitats. Ideally there should be some thick cover for nesting birds, some open glades for ground flora and feeding birds, some tall, mature trees for a variety of wildlife, and some dead wood for hole-nesting birds, insects and fungi.

When the National Park Authority bought Freeholders Wood in 1982 it was clear that unless something was done, the wood would all end up as thick cover within a few decades and the variety of habitats would be lost. This would have threatened the species diversity. With this in mind, the Authority has begun managing the wood so as to ensure the continued presence of a range of habitats. How this is done will be seen shortly.

**Stop 4: Coppicing**

An area of woodland on the left of the path has been cleared as part of the National Park Authority's management plan for Freeholders Wood. This plan is based on the reintroduction of coppicing – a traditional form of woodland management practised throughout the wood up until about 50 years ago.

Under this practice broad-leaved trees are cut down to stump height every 3-20 years. After cutting, or coppicing, the stumps or stools put forth many new shoots, or poles. These grow up rapidly fed by the root system. Most broad-leaved trees coppice well, hazel – the dominant species in the wood – especially so. Coppiced woods usually contain occasional mature trees (standards) to provide some shelter for the new growth.

Management of a wood coppicing produces considerable quantities of thin, straight poles. In the past these found a ready market as firewood and as a raw material for fencing and lath work. Indeed, coppicing was carried out specially to supply these markets.

Today Freeholders Wood is being coppiced for a very different reason. A coppiced wood contains a range of woodland habitats – clearings, thick clusters of shoots, and more mature trees. Coppicing therefore allows a much wider range of plant, bird and insect species to flourish than would do so in purely mature woodland. It introduces variety.

Coppicing has been restarted in Freeholders Wood after a halt of more than 50 years. The wood has been divided into 36 plots and one or two are being cut each winter. The plot before you now was cut in the early months of 1986. Regrowth from the stools has not been as promising as in other parts of the wood, but some have produced a number of shoots. In spring-time the benefits of coppicing the plot are becoming increasingly clear as flowers begin to colonise the ground. Amongst these are wild strawberry, columbine (purple flowers), St Johns Wort (yellow flowers) and primrose.



**Stop 5: Wet flush**

Turn around and look back down the path. To the left is a small patch of wet grassland. Water from the limestone bedrock comes to the surface at this point to form a spring, which trickles down to join the Ure. Although the area is tiny relative to the size of the whole wood, it is botanically very important. Its interest stems from its wetness and the water's rich lime content. In the midst of a hazel wood, it forms a tiny marshland habitat, containing plants not seen elsewhere in the vicinity. These include marsh marigold (yellow flowers), water mint (mauve flowers) and a variety of sedges.

The mini-marsh is fragile and would be damaged by trampling feet, so please stay on the path.

**Stop 6: Riddings field**

You are standing in the Riddings field. The name derives from the fact that the field was once cleared of woodland and scrub for agriculture. This would have been in medieval times.

Grassland is obviously present throughout the Yorkshire Dales, but is of varying interest to the botanist. This field is of particular value because the sward or plant community contains a wide range of plants – the result of centuries of traditional management. Today the management of grassland is rare. Increased use of fertilisers has reduced the species diversity of many swards. Fertilisers tend to encourage growth of a few grasses at the expense of the many other wild grasses and flowers.

Today the Riddings field is managed by the National Park Authority so as to conserve its range of wild plants. Grazing by cattle and sheep takes place during the summer to prevent the vegetation becoming rank and scrub invading. No artificial fertilisers or chemicals are used.

The path from the field down to the Lower Falls (stop 7) is steep. Visitors in wheelchairs should attempt the descent only if they are experienced in moving over rough terrain.

**Stop 7: Lower Falls**

The Lower Falls are the highest of the waterfalls at Aysgarth and are best seen after heavy rain.

The Ure is typical of the clean rivers of the Yorkshire Dales National Park and is rich in wildlife. The waters are much revered by fishermen because they contain the brown trout, native to the Dales rivers. Grayling and the nationally rare crayfish are also found. There is also a rich variety of insect life – including mayflies and stoneflies – providing a good food source for fish and birds. On a warm summer evening trout may be seen jumping into the air to swallow flies in the quieter sections of the river.

Several different sorts of bird frequent the river. The tiny white-breasted dipper may be seen 'bobbing' at the water's edge. A number of species of wagtail can also be found here.

Although the Ure is very pure and unpolluted, the water is often a brownish colour and foam builds up near the falls. Both of these phenomena are entirely natural. The Ure is fed by gills and becks draining from the high moorland and the brown colour is simply due to peat staining. The foaming arises from natural breakdown of plant material on the moors. This produces a range of natural chemicals, one of which closely resembles the substance that makes up ordinary soap. In the soft waters of the Ure 'lathering' takes place, especially where the water is agitated at a waterfall.

This is the last stop on the trail. Visitors in wheelchairs should return to the Riddings field by the way they came. Others should continue on the path close to the river, passing over some rocky ledges, and turn right up the path through the wood to the Riddings field. In either case retrace your steps back to the road and the Centre. If you wish to visit the Upper Falls, a short detour can be made down the road, entering the car park from the other end. Wheelchair access to the Upper Falls is difficult and not recommended.

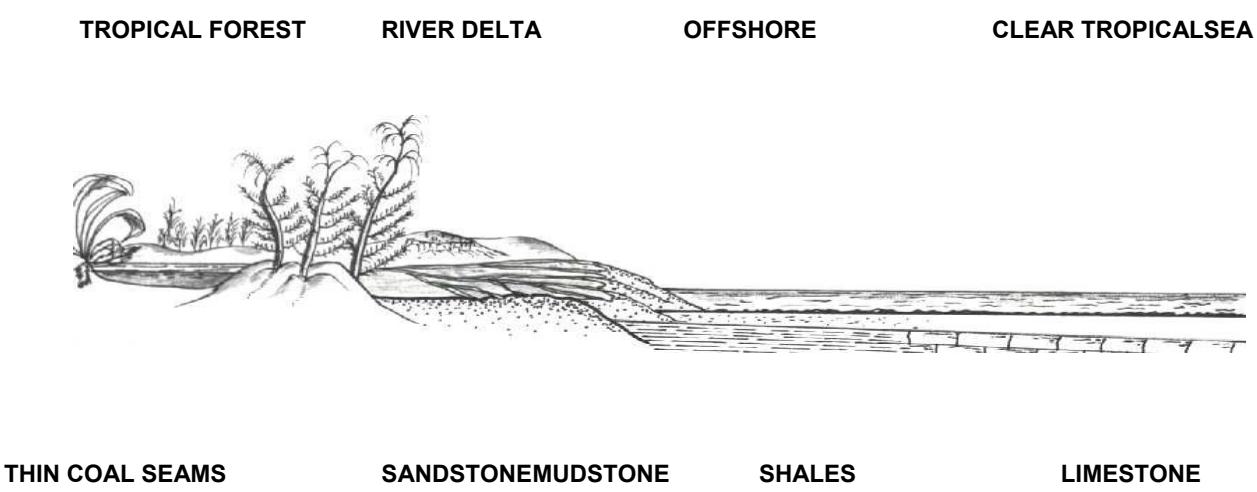


# THE GEOLOGY OF AYSGARTH FALLS

## NOTES FOR TEACHERS

### Background to the geology of the Yorkshire Dales

The landscape of the Dales is dominated geologically by the Carboniferous Era, between 345 - 280 million years ago. Layers of sedimentary rocks were laid down on the beds of vast ancient seas, lagoons and river deltas covering a piece of even older deeply buried granite known as the Askrigg Block. At this time the seas were undergoing a series of advances and retreats. Shales formed in deep water, sandstone in shallower conditions and limestone from shells and the remains of sea life.




Movements in the earth's crust, particularly massive uplifts and folding at the end of the Carboniferous Period and during the Tertiary Period some 20 million years ago, which created the Alps, affected Britain. Crumpling and uplifting of rocks created the Pennine Chain. Later, rapid erosion of overlying rocks and the softer coal measures left the older, harder rocks exposed.

The three major rock types from this period which give the Dales its distinctive features are The Great Scar Limestone, The Yoredale Series and The Millstone Grit.

The Yoredale Series dominates Wensleydale and it is these rocks which have shaped the landscape around Aysgarth and the course of the River Ure which is the area of interest for this visit. The Yoredale Series lies above the Great Scar Limestone and was given the old name for the Dale by a Yorkshire geologist, John Phillips.

Due to the almost horizontal alignment of the Yoredale rocks the surrounding fells have a stepped or terraced appearance. The more resistant limestone and sandstone beds exposed as scars while the softer shales have been eroded.

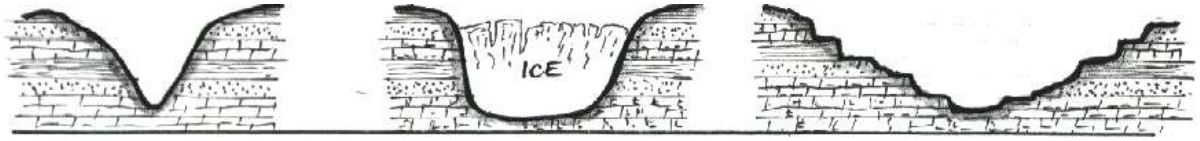
This is only part of the story. Over the last 500,000 there have been three Ice Ages. The latest known as the Devensian reached its peak 25,000 years ago resulting in glaciers that covered all but the highest summits. The erosive power of the glaciers left deposits of clay and boulders on the valley floors when they retreated leaving broad U - shaped valleys as in Wensleydale. In the Dale these deposits, known as moraines, formed a natural dam across the valley behind which a lake formed. The River Ure force its way through this barrier and the power of the water, when the dam was breached stripped away surface material down to the underlying bedrock of the Yoredales.

Meltwater from the ice produced mounds and ridges known as kames and eskers respectively. There are kames in Freeholders Wood and on the southern side of the riverbank. These consist of sand and gravel. Another kind of deposit left by the retreating ice is the drumlin. These were formed when the ice moulded moraine into a streamlined shape; the most famous around Aysgarth is Lady Hill to the west of the village.

**River erosion quickly forming V-shaped valley**

**Glacier cuts deep into rock during ice age**

**Weathering of rock in Yoredale Series by frost and rain. Less valley erosion by river**




**PRE-GLACIAL V-SHAPEDVALLEY**

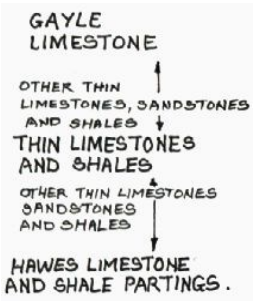
**GLACIAL U-SHAPED VALLEY**

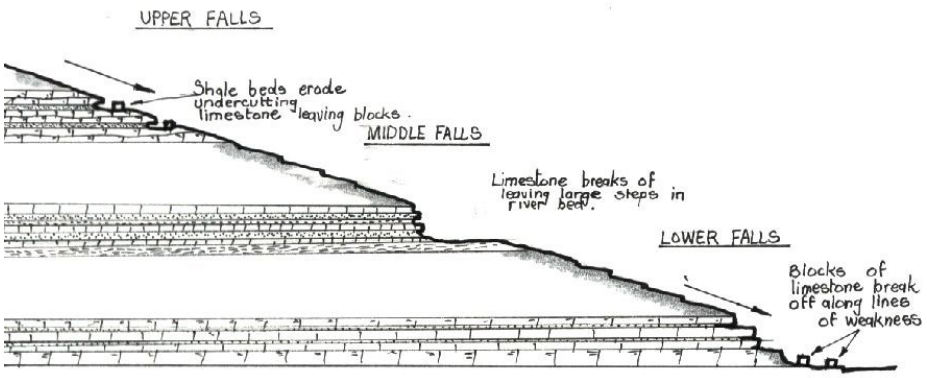
**POST-GLACIAL STEPPED LANDSCAPE**

## The Falls

The Upper, Middle and Lower Falls owe their existence to a natural fall in the profile of the Dale. During the Ice Age a more aggressive and thicker glacier in Bishopdale eroded more deeply than its Wensleydale tributary leaving the floor of the latter perched or "hanging" above Bishopdale forming a rock step at the confluence of the rivers after the ice melted. In addition, the River Ure has, since the Ice Age, cut down through the thick massive limestones of the lower Yoredale rocks.

## Geological cross-section through the Falls




## The visit and points to note

Follow the signs in the car park to the Upper Falls, this avoids walking on the road. (The Upper Falls are on private land and are not owned by the National Park.) Note how the river flows slowly until it falls over steps in the thick limestones and also the large blocks of limestone which have become detached due to the erosion of the softer underlying shale beds.

Retrace you steps though the gate and look at the river from near the bridge. (TAKE GREAT CARE AS THERE IS NO PAVEMENT OVER THE BRIDGE AND THE VIEW OF DRIVERS IS RESTRICTED.) Note the small gorge, which has formed below the Upper Falls, also the steeping of the riverbed forming small rapids as the river flows over narrow resistant bands of limestones and sandstones. Return though the gate at the roadside and pass through the car park to the main ntrance. Cross the road (TAKE GREAT CARE WHEN CROSSING NEAR DANGEROUS BLIND BEND.) and pass through hand gates leading to Middle and Lower Falls.

Follow the gravel path and shortly on your right see steps leading down to viewing area for the Middle Falls. Note viewing platform at top of steps for wheelchairs. Descend steps and note that towards the bottom the steps carved alternately "Limestone" and "Sandstone" on the treads and risers, imitating the "stepped" nature of the landscape.
Here the river falls steeply over narrow bands of horizontal limestone and shales. If there are large quantities of water flowing over the falls a mass of foam may sometimes form at the bottom. This is caused by a chemical reaction between the calcium carbonate in the limestone and the acidic peaty water from the uplands. It is not due to pollution.

Return up the steps to the main path and turn right through the bottom of Freeholders Wood. Leave the wood through hand gates and note the iron kissing-gate, a relic from the building of the railway up Wensleydale. You have left the wood and are now in an area of open land known as the Riddings field. The name implies that the field was at one time cleared of woodland and scrub for agriculture. It is thought to have been managed as grassland for hundreds of years.
You can now see on your left small hills, which are kames and small drumlins of glacial debris. On closer inspection of the soil note most of the material is composed of loose stones, pebbles and gravel unlike the hard limestone on which you are walking.

Proceed down the track and through the hand gate. Turn right at the junction of paths. On approaching a viewing area there is a good prospect of the Lower Falls. Here the river flows over the hard resistant beds of the Hawes limestone. Again note blocks broken away from the main falls due to the erosion of thin shale beds in the rock. Note the rock sculptures in the path showing the story of the formation of fossils in the limestone.

Continue along the footpath until you come out above the falls where, when the river level is low, you can see dozens of potholes in the river bedrock, worn by swirling and grinding pebbles and silt. In some places the river has dissolved a way through to a lower bedding plane, ever trying to lower its bed. Look down the river and note the small gorge the River Ure has cut in the limestone as the falls have retreated up river. In some places the river has cut down through the Yoredale Series to the underlying Great Scar Limestone. Contrast this to the view of the river above the Upper Falls.

Look carefully in the limestone over which you are walking. In some places you may be lucky enough to see fossil corals usually comprising broken stems of sea lilies or crinoids, a cup shaped animal living on a stem. These compound or colonial corals have been worn down and only the ends of the stems can be seen in the limestone. Follow the side of the river to take the return path up the bank and, at the gate, turn left to follow the main path back to the car park and Information Centre.

**And finally**

This is a constantly evolving landscape as the River Ure cuts into the Yoredale rocks and the waterfalls continue to retreat up the valley. The glacial deposits in the valley bottom will be eroded and reshaped as the river flows through the landscape. The classic stepped and terraced hillsides of Wensleydale are constantly attacked by wind, rain and frost action enhancing and forever changing its features.

**Answers to Student Questions**

1. (a) Limestone, (b) Sandstone, (c) Shale.
2. U-shaped.
3. Stepped or Terraced
4. Broken off from the front of the waterfall due to the soft shale wearing away underneath. Limestone.
5. Wheelchairs.
6. Reaction between limestone and the peat and organic matter in the acidic water. (Pollution is not the right answer but a good try!)
7. Debris left behind by the retreating glacier after the last Ice Age. Approx.12,000 years ago.
8. The deposition of remains of coral and seashells in shallow seas 350,000,000 years ago which formed limestone under great pressure.
9. Swirling, grinding action of stones and pebbles, which formed small holes, which get progressively deeper and larger in limestone when covered in water.
10. River flows slowly meandering through landscape above Upper Falls, but flows quickly over rapids through a gorge below the Lower Falls. The gorge is formed by rock being worn away as the waterfalls move up the valley.

# AYSGARTH FALLS: ROCKS AND RIVER QUESTIONS FOR STUDENTS

A very long time ago, about 330 million years, the climate of the Yorkshire Dales was much warmer than it is now. Many corals and small, shelled sea creatures lived in the tropical seas which covered the area. Where you are standing may have been a beach. As you looked around, you may have seen a large river delta, running into the sea in the distance. Over millions of years, the sea level in the area rose and fell, creating layers of different deposits:

- sandy, gritty materials from the river delta
- layers made from the remains of hard, limy corals and sea shells
- muddy crumbly rock laid down just offshore from the delta

These layers sunk below the surface of the earth and for many millions of years, they were crushed by great pressures from materials dumped on top of them. Since then they have been pushed back to the surface and exposed. These are the rocks which can be found in the hills and the river valley around Aysgarth.

**Q1 Look around you on the walk, name the rocks you can find:**

**a hard smooth grey rock** ……..

**a hard rough gritty rock** ……..

**a soft crumbly rock** ……..

About 25,000 years ago it became much colder than it is now, so cold it snowed even in summer! This was an Ice Age. Ice was so thick it filled the whole valley. The ice formed a glacier, which changed the shape of this valley. When the ice melted, it left small hills of broken stones, pebbles and grits, called kames and drumlins. After the ice had gone, the rocks were attacked by wind and rain.

**Q2 Do you know the name given to a valley, which had a glacier in it?**

……..……..

**Q3 How would you describe the valley-shape of Wensleydale?**

……..……..

The River Ure flows over rocks similar to those on the hillsides. It flows over the hard rocks and wears away the softer rocks underneath. At the Upper Falls you can see many large rocks in the river below the falls.

Q4 Where do you think these rocks have come from? What are they made of?



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The National Park Authority has made a good footpath down to the Middle and Lower falls to enable better access for disabled people.

**Q5 Above the steps to the Middle Falls there is a platform, what is it for?**



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If there is a lot of water coming over the falls you may see some foam at the bottom which looks like soap bubbles.

**Q6 Can you guess what might be causing this foam?**



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After leaving the wood you come into an open grass area. On your left are some small hills and mounds, have a look and see what kind of rock they are made from.

**Q7 Do you know how these small hills were formed and when?**



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This open area is known as the Riddings, which means that the area was once cleared of woodland and scrub for agriculture. The Riddings has been managed as grassland for hundreds of years, which has allowed many species of wild flowers to develop. See how many different kinds you can see, **but please remember that it's illegal to pick them.**

As you go down the path to the Lower Falls you will come to a viewing area. Look on the path where you are standing. Can you see some carvings on the stones? They tell the story of how a particular rock was formed.

**Q8 Can you name the rock and tell the story in the steps?**

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Soon you will come out by the side of the river above the falls where you will see many strange holes in the rock, some of them under the water. Inside some of them you will find stones and pebbles.

**Q9 How do you think these holes have been formed?**

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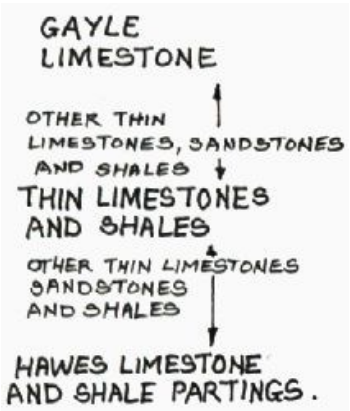
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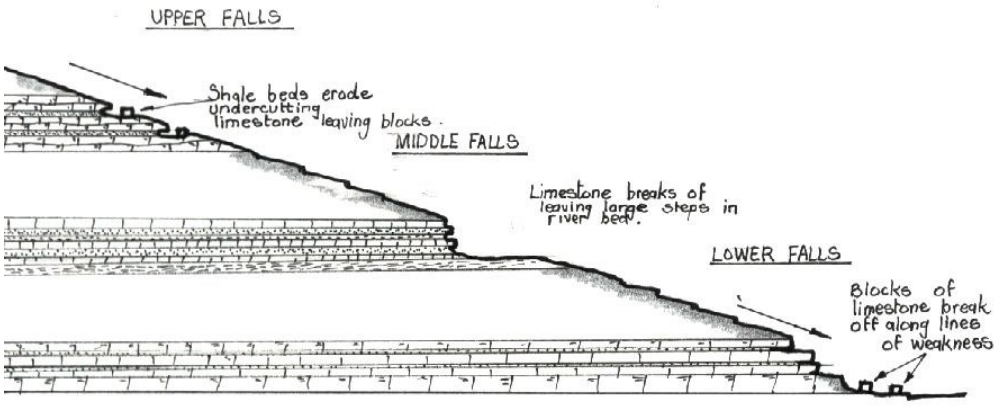
**Q10 Can you remember what the river valley looked like above the Upper Falls? How is it different here? Can you explain the difference?**

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**Geological cross-section through the falls**



# WILDLIFE IN FREEHOLDERS WOOD
## STUDENT WORKSHEET

Freeholders' Wood is one of the largest semi-natural woods in the Yorkshire Dales National Park. There have been trees here since at least 1600. Many of the plants and animals present are the same species as those that settled soon after the last Ice Age. Along the steep riverbank, the wood probably never been worked by people.

The wood is named after a small group of local people who have the ancient right of "estovers" in the wood, this means that they can gather firewood and cut the trees.
In earlier times, woodland was used as a renewable resource by local people. Hazel, growing in the wood was often cut down to a low stump or 'stool'. Instead of killing the tree, it would then sprout lots of straight stems or 'poles'. These could be harvested at different sizes. Cutting plots in the wood in rotation creates continual new growth and a supply of wood for different uses. This process is called coppicing. The wood is now owned by the National Park Authority, who are re-introducing coppicing as a sustainable means of managing the wood.

**List some uses of wood that you can think of.**

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In the past, the thin straight poles harvested by coppicing have been used as fence poles, firewood and for turning on the lathe. Today Freeholders Wood is coppiced for a very different reason. The coppice rotation means that there are lots of plots of different ages, which make a variety of places, or 'habitats', for plants and animals to live. There are clearings, thick clusters of newly growing shoots and more mature trees. This variety provides some thick cover for nesting birds, some tall, mature trees for a variety of wildlife, and some dead wood for hole-nesting birds, insects and fungi. This means that the wood is very valuable for wildlife conservation.

A variety of plants make up a colourful carpet on parts of the woodland floor. This comes to life in April when wood anemone, primrose and violet begin to flower. Later bluebell, wild garlic and early purple orchid add their own colour.

**How many different plant species can you see growing under the trees?**

**Make up names for them to help you remember what they look like.**

……

……...



**Use this space to make rubbings from leaves or tree bark.**

During May the trees open their new leaves and birds nest in the thick scrub. Ash is one of the latest trees to awake from the winter.

Throughout the summer the wood is busy with the activities of insects, birds and mammals. In late summer, fruits begin to ripen. Rowan and wild cherry become heavy with their bright berries and hazel trees are loaded with nut clusters.

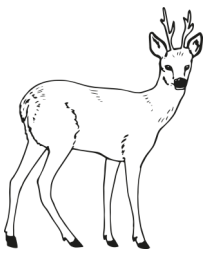
**Name some creatures that would use these nuts and berries for food.**

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Towards the end of September leaves begin to fall, announcing the oncoming winter. At the same time a wide variety of fungi dot the damp woodland floor. Evidence of grey squirrel and hazel dormouse activity can be seen: nuts lie open and gnawed. The nuthatch may also be seen, if you're really lucky, wedging nuts into bark crevices and cracking them open with its beak.

**Use the space to draw a food chain found in Freeholders wood.**



# TOURISM AT AYSGARTH FALLS
## STUDENT WORKSHEET

Visitors have been coming to see Aysgarth Falls for over two hundred years. Early travellers such as Defoe, had put people off the area. In his book - "Tour through the Whole Island of Great Britain" written between 1724–1727, he dismissed the wild fells of the Yorkshire Dales because of their "…terrible aspect … especially Penigent Hill". Despite this poor recommendation, people gradually began to visit, helped by improved access and a growing fashion among the wealthy, for a 'romantic' or 'curious' landscape. Artists were also drawn to capture landscape images.

**How would you describe Aysgarth Falls and the surrounding area?**

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Throughout the 19th century, improving transport facilities brought growing numbers of people to the Dale. Early in the century, stage coaches travelling between York and Lancaster used Aysgarth as a staging-post. Travellers made their way to the river to view the Falls, while waiting for horses to be changed. By the 1850's, attitudes were changing. It was about this time that Ruskin visited Aysgarth and enthused about the area; "…out and out the finest thing in water I've seen in these islands … the rocks going out in perfectly flat tables … wilder than the Highlands."

Tourism at Aysgarth really took off during Victorian times, with the arrival of the railway in the 1870's. Better access and the introduction of work holidays, saw the popularity of the 'excursion' grow. Tourists took advantage of cheaper rail travel and were helped by new guide-books featuring local attractions, published during the last two decades of the century. In the early 1900s excursions were regularly run on Bank Holidays from Leeds and Bradford and the mill towns of Lancashire. The North Eastern Railway also ran day trips from Tyneside and Teeside.

**Use a map to find these places and the distances visitors travelled.**

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**As well as people, which other things may have been transported by rail ?**

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In 1926 the bus service brought cheaper and more convenient travel - and even more visitors. Faced with growing competition from public transport and private cars, the railway declined. The last passenger train arrived at Aysgarth Station in 1954.

**Can you still catch the bus to Aysgarth ?** ……..

**What is Aysgarth station used for now ?**

**……..……**

Today, most people visiting Aysgarth Falls arrive in their own cars. This has created the need to provide adequate parking and visitor facilities.

**Do you think there is sufficient parking space for busy times of the year ?**

**……..……**

By the early 1980s, as the Falls became even more popular with visitors, as a result of which the woodland began to suffer from severe trampling damage. In 1982 the National Park Authority bought Freeholder's Wood and laid paths to discourage walkers from taking their own routes through the trees. Platforms were also built at the Lower and Middle Falls to provide the best and safest views of the waterfalls.

**List some ways in which visitors are managed in the Aysgarth Falls area.**

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Many businesses around Aysgarth Falls have either developed specifically for tourists or have adapted to take advantage of the tourist trade.

**List some businesses at Aysgarth Falls that are aimed at tourists.**

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The Wensleydale Railway Company hope to re-open the railway along the length of Wensleydale in the near future. This will mean re-opening the station at Aysgarth.