

MARCH 2017

STUNNING SPRING BREAKS>

Great ideas to make the most of the new season





Walk into history along the mighty Antonine Wall

EPIC VIEWS

14 walks into glorious landscapes RIDE ACROSS DARTMOOR Radio 2's Sara Cox saddles up

10 easy ways to make your

to make your life greener

Ellie's wild COTSWOLDS

Head off the beaten track with Ellie Harrison's guide to her favourite wildlife havens

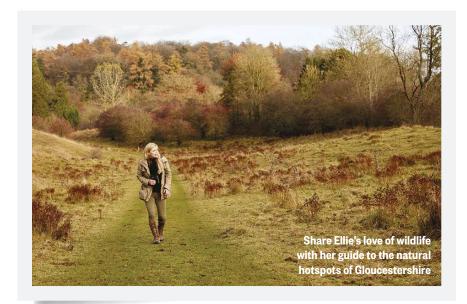


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New wold order...



The word Cotswolds naturally conjures images of exquisite honey-coloured hamlets and cottages set in the vales and escarpments of these famously well-heeled hills. But there's more to the region than rolling farmland, grand homes and golden limestone – and we're extremely lucky to have *Countryfile* presenter and naturalist Ellie Harrison to lead the way.

The Gloucestershire Cotswolds are Ellie's homeland but she's happiest away from the picture-postcard villages – instead indulging her passion for wildlife in natural beauty spots. This month we've managed to convince her to reveal her favourite places in Gloucestershire where you can have surprising encounters with the wild side. Read her tales on page 18.

This month I also particularly love Dixe Wills' plan to walk the length of the 'other' Roman wall. Built 40 years after Hadrian's more famous effort, the Antonine Wall (after Emperor Antoninus) runs between the Firths of Clyde and Forth. The 39 miles of largely overlooked ramparts and ditches make for a haunting journey – which you can follow on page 64.

Lastly, a feature I've been waiting for... Gwen Bailey's hints and tips on ensuring stress-free dog walks, page 32. As an owner of a wonderfully erratic whippet-lurcher, I am immensely grateful for her suggestions – I might not have to keep telling Idris: "People will love you more if you jump up less."

Fergus Collins, editor@countryfile.com

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THIS MONTH'S CONTRIBUTORS



Fllie Harrison

"I'm going to show you the Wild Wolds - the natural history, the geology, the prehistoric," says Ellie, rebelling against the tourist guides on **page 18**



Dixe Will

"When you walk the Antonine Wall, you think yourself into the sandals of the Romans." Dixe goes a-Roman roaming in central Scotland, page 64



Gwen Bailev

"Even intractable hounds can be trained and brought to heel – and most dog walks can be peaceful and happy," says Gwen on **page 32**

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Farmers are busy fertilising the fields this month – but why is it so important?



ON YOUR COVER

Ellie Harrison pictured in Lower Woods Nature Reserve, South Gloucestershire.

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On the cover

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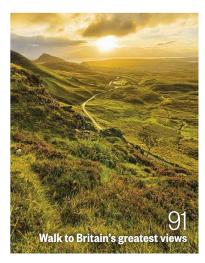
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Dixe Wills roams the remains of an ancient fortification built by the Romans in AD 142 to fend off the Picts.







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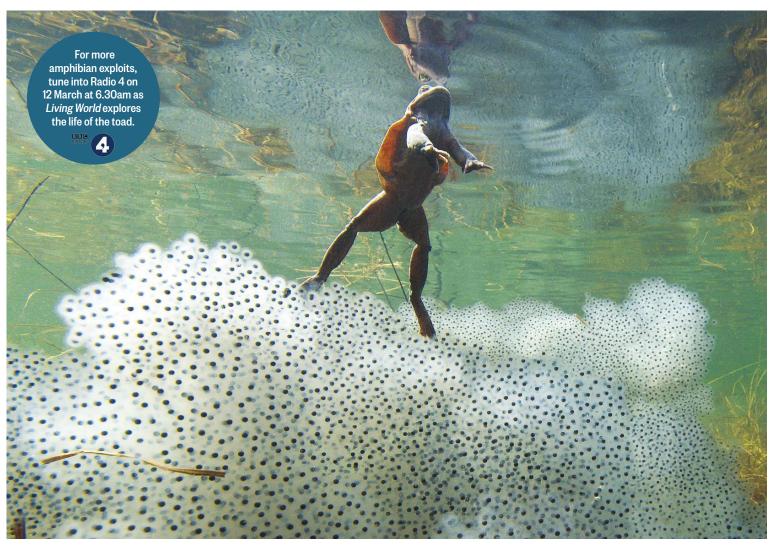
Yr Eifl, Llyn Peninsula

108 Top seven monuments

Nationwide







CLOUDS OF SPAWN

In late February and early March, it pays to watch out for a stretch of warmer days on the long-range weather forecasts. This will stir frogs and toads into breeding action so, if you have a pond, keep popping out to check it – you should see ripples from frogs or toads diving away at your approach, coupled with excitable croaking. Having emerged from the sanctuary of hibernation, they gather to breed. If you have frogs in your garden, one morning you will look out to see the pond margins suddenly billowing with spawn (pictured) – the result of a frenzy of mating activity overnight.

> WOMEN'S LAND ARMY CENTENARY

This month marks 100 years since the Women's Land Army was established. During the First World War, the WLA recruited young women from all walks of life and trained them for farm work, replacing some of the millions of British men who had left their jobs to enlist in the armed forces. Britain needed to rely on homegrown produce, and 20,000 Land Girls had joined up by 1918 to do everything from working in dairies and harvesting crops to catching rats and operating heavy machinery in their iconic smock uniforms.



Share your best photos for the chance to feature as our 'Photo of the Day' on social media. Simply tweet your pic, share on Facebook or post on Instagram using the hashtag **#Photooftheday**. Alternatively, you can email: **photos@countryfile.com** but please include the subject line 'Photo of the Day'.







Flower of the month

WOOD ANEMONE

by Kevin Parr

Our broad-leaved trees are slow to stir in spring.
The sun might be warming by the day, but it
will be many weeks before the woodland canopy
is fully formed with foliage.

Without the obstruction of the leaves, the sun's rays reach the forest floor unfiltered, and here smaller plants make the most of the opportunity to create a sea of green for themselves.

Dominant in March are the distinctive leaves of the wood anemone. These are palmate in shape and slightly reminiscent of flat-leaved parsley, although their odour should prevent any herbaceous confusion. Their musty waft is not unlike the musk of a fox, leading indeed to the local name 'smell fox'.

A more familiar sobriquet is 'windflower', particularly in a historical context. The Roman scribe Pliny wrote of this delicate flower in his Natural History, suggesting that it was so named because it will not open up its petals until the wind blows. Though this is a slightly unsatisfactory explanation, it does allude to the sensitivity of the wood anemone in relation to the weather. During heavy rain, or as dew threatens at dusk, the linen white sepals of the wood anemone fold shut and the flower droops over like the head of a scolded puppy. This process helps to protect the delicate stamen and immature seed-heads within. It was once believed that wood-dwelling fairies would take shelter in the flowers of the wood anemone, sleeping through a storm having

drawn the curtains snugly around them.

In the morning, the flowers open once again, dotting our woodlands like a carpet of stars.

Quote of the month

6 In the spring I have counted one hundred and thirty-six different kinds of weather inside of four and twenty hours.

Mark Twain

Don't miss...

BBC Countryfile Live 2017

BBC Countryfile Live returns to Blenheim Palace to bring you the best of Britain's countryside over four action-packed days, from 3-6 August. Watch an exclusive Countryfile Live stage show; meet rare breeds at Adam's Farm; climb aboard mighty farm machinery; watch animal arena shows, get stuck into outdoor activities and learn new skills with cooking and craft demonstrations. Perfect for all the family. Buy discounted tickets with our brilliant offer on page 63. countryfilelive.com



NINE TO SPOT: WALKING SIGNS

Do you know your bridleways from your BOATs? Diverse signs and waymarkers on walking trails can be confusing. The Ramblers explains what the most common of these mean... ramblers.org.uk



FOOTPATH

Footpaths are open to walkers only, and are waymarked with a yellow arrow. You'll see this sign across England and Wales.



BRIDLEWAY

Bridleways are open to walkers, horse-riders and cyclists, and are waymarked with a blue arrow. The sign applies in England and Wales.



RESTRICTED BYWAY

Waymarked with a purple arrow, the sign applies in England and Wales and is open to walkers, cyclists, horse-riders and horse-drawn vehicles.



BYWAY OPEN TO ALL TRAFFIC (BOAT)

Waymarked with a red arrow, this is open to walkers, cyclists, horse-riders, horse-drawn and motor vehicles and applies in England and Wales.



NATIONAL TRAILS

The acorn symbol represents
15 long-distance routes in England and
Wales. All are open for walking; some
are suitable for cyclists and horse-riders
and people with limited mobility.



OPEN ACCESS LAND

Just over a million hectares of mountain, moorland, heathland, common land and woodland in England and Wales are available to walk, run, climb and explore in without having to stay on paths.



NEGATIVE ACCESS SYMBOL

This sign may be used to mark the end of area-wide access, although other access rights may exist, for example public rights of way.



QUIET LANES

Local authorities can designate rural roads connecting communities as Quiet Lanes with lower speed limits, making them safer and more attractive to walkers, cyclists and horse riders.



HOME ZONES

Home Zones – where roads and streets have been altered into more community-friendly spaces – give equal priority to drivers, pedestrians and cyclists with traffic-calming measures.

DON'T MISS

DATES FOR THE DIARY



1 March

Spring wildflower walk, Wiltshire

This month is the perfect time to visit Lacock Abbey's gorgeous gardens, as the annual show of snowdrops, winter aconites and daffodils carpet the abbey's elegant grounds. Join head gardener Sue Perkins to learn some insider tips and to see which early blooms you can spot. Free, entrance to Lacock £12.70

nationaltrust.org.uk



3-12 March Words by the Water festival

Sit by the side of a lake in the Northern Fells, and let the spoken word inspire you. Well-known names including Melvyn Bragg, Vince Cable and George Monbiot will descend on the Theatre by the Lake, on the edge of Derwentwater, for the festival. Tickets from £16

theatrebythelake.com



24-26 March

Wild Film Festival, Scotland

The moorlands of Dumfries and Galloway are the gorgeous backdrop to this year's Wild Film Festival, which includes a talk given by Springwatch presenter Iolo Williams and the screenings of the winners of the 2016 Panda Awards, often called the Oscars of wildlife films.

Ticket prices TBC

wildfilmfestivalscotland.co.uk



in season

SPRING CHICKEN IN A

This cheerful recipe from BBC Good Food will brighten up rainy spring days, and showcases all the tasty garden greens sprouting up in the new season

You will need

- •1tbsp olive oil
- · 1 onion, chopped
- 500g boneless, skinless chicken thigh
- · 300g small new potatoes
- 425ml low-salt vegetable stock
- 350g broccoli, cut into small florets
- 350g spring greens, shredded
- 140g petit pois
- bunch spring onion, sliced
- 2 tbsp pesto

- 1. Heat the oil in a large, heavy pan. Add the onion, gently frying for five mins until softened, and then the chicken, frying until lightly coloured. Add the potatoes, stock and plenty of freshly ground black pepper and bring to the boil. Cover and simmer for 30mins until the potatoes are tender and the chicken is cooked (the dish can be frozen at this point).
- 2. Add the broccoli, spring greens, petit pois and spring onions, stir well, then return to the boil. Cover and cook for a further five minutes, stir in the pesto and heat through before serving.

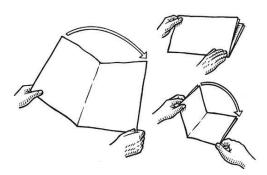
lustration: Alan Batey. Photos: Alamy, Getty, BBC Good Food / Myles New



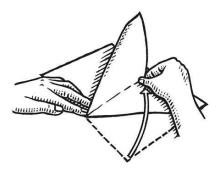
MAKE NEWSPAPER SEED POTS

Turn yesterday's news into containers for future sowing. The great advantage is that you don't have to repot seedlings – simply plant the whole pot in the ground and it will rot naturally, leaving the seedling to grow on strongly

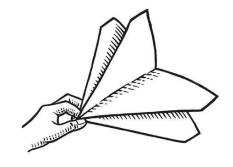
by Hannah Tribe



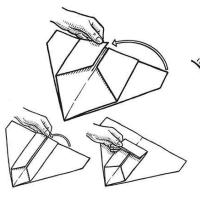
1. Fold the sheet of newspaper in half, left to right. Then fold the paper in half again, bottom to top. Then once more, left to right.



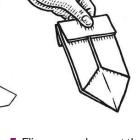
2. Open out the last fold. Take the bottom right corner and fold up and in towards the spine.



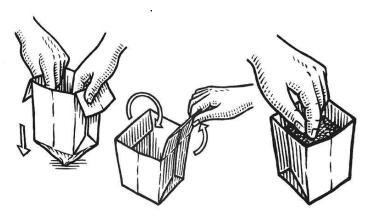
3. Do the same with the left-hand corner. You'll end up with an arrow shape comprising of four 'wings'.



4. Bring the outside edges of the top layer of paper to meet in the middle, then fold them in again. Fold the top edge of the paper down.



5. Flip over and repeat the last step. You should have with a narrow rectangle ending in a point. Stand the paper package up on its point.



6. Press down gently while opening the paper up, then flatten out the bottom with your fingers so that it sits square. Fold the ears inside.

7. Fill with compost and you're ready for planting.
Be careful not to leave these pots standing in water as they will disintegrate.

To watch a video of how to make newspaper seed pots, visit **countryfile.com/newspaperpots**

Did you know...

How quickly do days lengthen in spring?

During the Northern Hemisphere winter, the nature of the Earth's axis means the UK tilts away from the sun, giving us shorter days. But by the winter solstice (2l December) the tilt works in our favour and we start to see more light again, albeit slowly. At first it's as little as a minute of extra light per day but by early February, this has risen to three minutes every 24 hours. With an increase of almost four minutes, the spring equinox on **20 March** marks the fastest-growing day of the year. And clocks go forward on 26 March, giving us a welcome extra hour of evening light.





Adam Henson

THE COUNTRY'S FAVOURITE FARMER GIVES US HIS MONTHLY GUIDE TO AGRICULTURE IN BRITAIN

A GREEN AND PLEASANT LAND

ith spring in our sights, it's time to get to work on the land. For thousands of arable farmers across the UK, that means fertilising the fields. The clue to why we use fertiliser can be found in the word itself; for generations, the livelihoods of growers have depended on the fertility of the land they tend.

Fertilisers, either natural or man-made, provide important nutrients to plants to help them grow well and ensure a healthy, high yielding crop. There's nothing new about the practice. Before modern fertilisers were available, all sorts of materials were put on the fields to increase the productivity of the soil. Animal manure was common but in the 18th century it was also recommended that chimney soot, horn shavings and pig's trotters should be ploughed in to improve the soil. One agricultural handbook in the 1700s even suggested that the best fertiliser could be created from composting the combined contents of the village privies. That might have been taking neighbourliness just a little too far.

THE MAGIC OF MUCK

Plants need sunlight and water to survive, but they also require potassium, phosphorus and nitrogen. In the wild, nutrients in the soil are taken up by plants that are then replaced when those plants or their leaves die. But that can't happen in farming because we harvest them for food. That's where fertilisers come in, as a useful supplement to give the soil or the crops themselves a nutrient boost. The question is then whether to use organic or non-organic fertiliser?

When asked to name an organic variety, I suspect that most people would say manure. It's packed with those crucial nutrients and is like a super-food for the fields, as well as being good for soil structure, aeration and moisture levels. But it's not the only organic option; there's bloodmeal, bonemeal and, in horticulture, nettle feeds, seaweed and fish, blood and bone.

SPREADING THE WORD

On the whole, man-made fertilisers act faster, can be more convenient as they come in various forms and are



easily dissolved in water. On our farm in the Cotswolds, we use both the manure from our own overwintering livestock and a granular fertiliser. These are distributed by a 15 tonne muck spreader and a computer-controlled fertiliser spreader respectively. Targeting the exact amount of fertiliser that's needed is important to farmers. We have obligations to protect the environment and to avoid run off from fields into local rivers and streams. A great deal of work is done to reduce the amount of fertiliser used, installing modern field drainage, monitoring watercourses and planting deep-rooted trees and shrubs to absorb run off.

One organic method that has become increasingly common in conventional farming is the use of legumes (such as peas or beans) and clover. They have nodules on their roots that fix nitrogen from the atmosphere and soil and then provide it to the following crops once that plant is ploughed in, under a rotation system.

A HUNGRY PLANET

What about the future? The global population is set to increase to nine billion in the next 30 years, so clearly we will need to produce more food. That's unimaginable without the use of both organic and synthetic fertilisers.



Ask Adam: What topic would you like to know more about? Email your suggestions to editor@countryfile.com

hoto: Sean Maylon, Ali



Antarctica, the Falklands & South Georgia January - 23 days - from £12,995

Alaska - Prince William Sound

Spitsbergen - Realm of the Polar Bear

Western Canada - Spirit Bears & Grizzlies September - 10 days - from £4,695

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OPINION

Sara Maitland

An alphabet of storm names to better reflect their forceful, destructive nature

Illustration: Lynn Hatzius



I am sure that

I have a horrid feeling that this may be our fault - we, the Great British public, choose (through a quasi-electoral process) the names for the storms. And what do we come up with? Doris, Ivor, Valerie. I fear we may be showing grave disrespect and putting the storms into very bad moods (like adolescents). If I were a storm that was to be given the name of a puny earthling, at the least I'd want it to be fierce, mythic and powerful. So to celebrate windy March, I've worked on an alphabet of power and destruction in the hope of flattering this year's storms into calmer behaviour...

Attila the Hun and one of most feared enemies of both Roman Empires.

Beelzebub one of the seven princes of hell.

Cerberus the Hound of Hades, the multi-headed dog guarding the gates of the Underworld. Durga a Hindu warrior goddess whose primordial cosmic energy



represents the dynamic forces that move through the entire universe.

Ekimmu a Mesopotamian bloodsucking ghostly giant, with a bull's head.

Focalor a Great Duke of Hell, with power over wind and sea. Grendel the monster Beowulf finally destroyed under water. Hydra a serpentine monster with a vast number of heads. Inanna a Sumerian war deity who "stirs confusion and chaos and incites the devastating flood". Janna "the storm's fury," a sorceress given over to the primal powers of nature.

Kali Hindu goddess of battle. Leviathan the vast Biblical sea monster.

Moloch a Canaanite god associated with child sacrifice. Oni a horned, sharp-clawed troll, popular in Japanese folklore. Pakhet an Egyptian war goddess, known as the 'Night Huntress',



Sara Maitland is a writer who lives in Dumfries and Galloway. Her works include A Book of Silence and Gossip from the Forest.

associated with desert storms. **Qamaits** a Canadian goddess of war and death. She rarely visits the Earth, but when she does, she causes earthquakes,

forest fires and sickness.

Reshef a personification of plague in ancient Canaan, was adopted into Egyptian religion as a god of horses and chariots.

Smaug "a most specially greedy, strong and wicked worm", a fearsome dragon in The Hobbit.

Tohil a Mayan fire deity god of rain, war and sacrifice.

'Uj ibn Anaq a powerful giant in Islamic mythology.

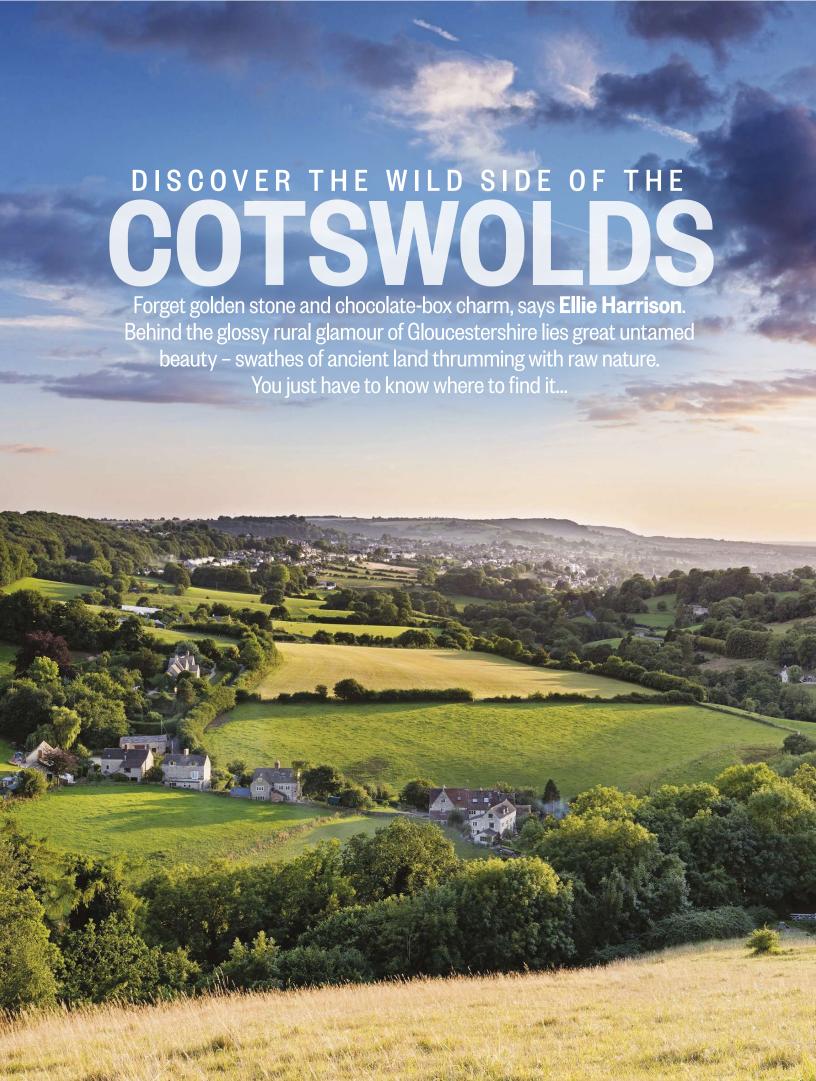
Vulcan Roman God of fire, volcanoes and metal working. Woden leader of the Wild Hunt. His name comes from wod 'violently insane' and -en 'headship'.

Xipe-Totec Aztec god of spring, of the start of the rainy season, of new vegetation and sacrifice. Ymir a hermaphrodite giant, the first living being in the Norse creation narrative. Zipacna and his brother Cabrakan were violent male demons.

The great forces of nature should not be belittled but respected and feared as they were throughout history and culture (and, moreover, it will not hurt us to learn about other mythologies from

around the world).

Have your say What do you think about the issues raised here? Write to the address on page 3 or email editor@countryfile.com





hen holiday guides and travel PR gurus spool through the Cotswold honey-coloured-stone rhetoric, I get the same sinking feeling as seeing tourists dining in hotspot steak eateries in London. Please don't spend your money on that. That's not the authentic, living, real-world of the place. That's the shouty part that wants your cash.

Sure, the stone has a yellow tone that fires up the Farrow & Ball-types (it's more of a grey in the south of the region, which also fires up the Farrow & Ball-types), and indeed, that stone may tell a part of the history of the area as most building took place during the boom years of the wool trade. But it's all relatively recent history, compared to the Cotswolds I'm going to show you: the natural history of this place, the geology, the prehistoric. This is a guide to the Wild Wolds (without the cots that penned the sheep) minus the gift-shops, the shiny clean 4x4s gliding over tarmac and without all the horses upon horses upon horses.

I know what you're thinking. How wild can a place be if it doesn't risk altitude sickness? Surely it's fells, mountains and uplands that represent real wildness? A long time ago maybe, but as many now recognise, our uplands are disappointingly barren these •

LEFT Slad Valley near Stroud, a typical Cotswold vale immortalised by author Laurie Lee



"GULLIES OF MOSSY ROCKS, TWISTED YEW TREE ROOTS AND HOBBIT PATHWAYS"

days having been grazed to the quick. Granted, getting up high blows your hair right out of place and often affords you the chance to stomp around Heathcliff-style all alone and moody. But there'll be plenty of that kind of free spirit in my guide, where the wind will make your ears ring and where your heartache will belong. As well as a huge diversity of wildlife, the great yard stick of wildness.

Come with me now to the less-explored 'other side of the river'; to gems on the mighty River Severn itself; and to the secret discoveries among the part of the Cotswolds that you thought you knew.

WALK ON THE WILD SIDE

Let's start across the river with Lancaut and Ban-y-Gor. Here you can experience 30m cliff tops, intertidal mudflats and one of the four most important ancient woodlands in the country all within just a short walk. From on high there are fantastic views along the Wye Valley.

Star species include nesting peregrine falcons, ravens, sword-leaved helleborine, several species of endemic whitebeam plus common seals that occasionally travel up the river on the high tide. Taking on the steep gradients, rocky ground and boulder scree feels wild and lonely, but with reminders of its human past: lime kilns and a ruined chapel. It is also a British Mountaineering Council climbing site, so you can experience the full 3D wonder of this place and visit it time and time again, always with a new vantage point.

WOODLAND DREAMS

Lying 10 miles to the north are the realms of **Puzzlewood**, the ancient woods as conjured in the imaginations of Hollywood





TOP The ruins of 12th-century
St James church beside the
River Wye at Lancaut ABOVE
LEFT Sword-leaved helleborine
graces the woodlands of Lancaut
ABOVE RIGHT Puzzlewood has
many winding pathways and
mysterious scowles (exposed cave
systems) to explore



producers. There are gullies of moss-covered rocks, twisted yew tree roots and pathways hewn from the toils of hobbits. It's even thought that Tolkien himself took inspiration from Puzzlewood to write about Middle Earth. The enchanting landscape was in fact created when uplifted cave systems were gradually exposed at the surface and the limestone was eroded, leaving interesting rock formations and the setting for folklore.

In the mid 1800s, workmen found a small cavity in the rocks after moving stone and discovered 3,000 Roman coins in earthenware jars. This is the place to come to sate today's thirst for ye olde Britain – picture faery clans cloaked in ivy green velvet capes, pinned with elven brooches. A film-maker's dream, it is here that the BBC's *Merlin* and *Atlantis* were filmed – and the woods staged a scene in *Star Wars: The Force Awakens*.

Onwards north-east, to **Hope and**Flaxley Woods. When these are deserted, you can stand still and enjoy a 360-degree soundscape of wild music: heart-filling and humbling birdsong.



MAY MADNESS

Standing 15 miles north-east is May Hill, straddling Gloucestershire and Herefordshire. It is well known from afar by its tuft of pine trees on the top, planted to commemorate the golden jubilee of Queen Victoria. Fewer people get on up there, past the woodland cake, to the grassland icing on top and its evergreen summit cherry of Corsican pines, 300m up. This adornment on the very top is the only part that doesn't belong to the National Trust and is instead registered as a village green. But you'll find no cricket and cream teas here. May Hill provides the setting for wild May Day shenanigans that saw the place's original name - Yartleton Hill - changed centuries ago, in recognition of its raucous festivities.

The rest of the year you can enjoy quiet blustery views across the Welsh borders, Cotswold Hills, the Black Mountains, Forest of Dean and the Severn Vale. The hill is grazed using commoners' livestock but plenty of developing birch, oak and crab apple trees offer more homes for insects. It is a great place to spot meadow pipits, tree pipits, redstarts, ravens and woodcocks.



TOP The elegant clump of Corsican pines on May Hill, planted to commemmorate Queen Victoria ABOVE Walk the Laurie Lee Wildlife Way in Slad valley OPPOSITE TOP Daneways Nature Reserve is part of Golden Valley, a rolling grassland of natural delights OPPOSITE BOTTOM Woodchester Mansion, an unfinished Gothic revival edifice

We now move eastwards to this side of the river to enter **Golden Valley**. It's thought that the quality of the light through the leaves of the beech woods, along the meandering valley and refracted through low hanging mist, is what gave the place its name. Generally good eggs hold the paperwork to the land – the Wildlife Trust, Woodland Trust and caring long-lived locals, who I'm pleased to call neighbours – all of whom want to keep this place wild. Year round, buzzards call, muntjac shout and tawny owls observe flexible hours. Noisy in the best way.

LOVE LEE LAND

Snow's Farm is a reserve of traditional Cotswold grassland near the village of Slad. There are slim chances of happening upon anybody else in this wild valley. It is Laurie Lee country, so enjoy the bucolic scenes he described. On a summer afternoon, come to read or wander by the Dillay Brook. Stay until dusk to watch roe, muntjac or fallow deer emerging from the woods.

A little to the south-west, we discover **Woodchester Mansion**. The mystery and





topography of the terrain that surrounds this old house makes it a chilling walk, even in the summer. For much of the year the sun is obscured by the steep-sided valley. There's the oddly placed mansion in the depths of the landscape; the peculiarity of the building, abandoned midway through construction; and tales about people of the past taking their lives in the lakes. It all lends itself to the eerie atmosphere and the promise of a poetic time in the wild. I used to come here as a teen with friends, fuelled on fruit-flavoured 'wine', and we'd all pretend not to be frightened. A corvid's croak is all that's required to complete the

experience.
Further south we trek to
Lower Woods. At almost
272 hectares (670 acres),
this ancient woodland is
big, so it's worth taking
time to enjoy it. After
walking some of the
62km of woodland
paths, you can
cool off in the



Photos: Alamy, Oliver Edwards

"THE CHARM OF THE NIGHTINGALE AND THE CHANCE TO SEE A GOSHAWK"

fresh water of the Little Avon river. There are special orchids here, including the violet helleborine, bird's-nest orchid and greater butterfly orchid. If that's too niche to excite you, the charm of the nightingale and chance to see a goshawk should do the trick. The site has over 2,500 years of documented human history and is still managed using traditional techniques with nature in mind. You can even buy products from the resident green woodworker made of timber from the site, with all proceeds going to conservation.

GHOSTS SHIPS ON GUARD

To explore the Severn itself, take an eerie walk around Purton Hulks, Britain's largest ship graveyard. These were deliberately beached to reinforce the riverbank and protect the narrow strip of land between the river and adjacent canal. Each vessel was taken out of Sharpness Dock on a high tide, towed by tug towards shore and released so that it charged up the bank as far as possible. Holes were then knocked into the hull to allow water and silt inside. Archaeological investigations are being conducted to find out more about each vessel and many are now labelled. It's worth looking online before heading there to make sense of the site. It's a wild experience that takes effort, especially in the mud, but it's worth it.

It will surprise you that some of the best fossil finds come from Gloucestershire. For today's fossil treasures, you need to head to the tidal River Severn, which cleans a new surface for searching every day. With the brilliant paleontologist Dean Lomax, I scoured the water's edge at **Arlingham** with my children. We returned from our mudlarking with buckets of prehistoric treasures: bivalves, crinoids, Gryphaea and full stone pizzas of invertebrate life from









millions of years ago. Mind boggling and joyful. Also an incredibly calming activity requiring mindful focus. Arlingham sits near **Saul**, inside a sharp meander in the river with handsome walks.

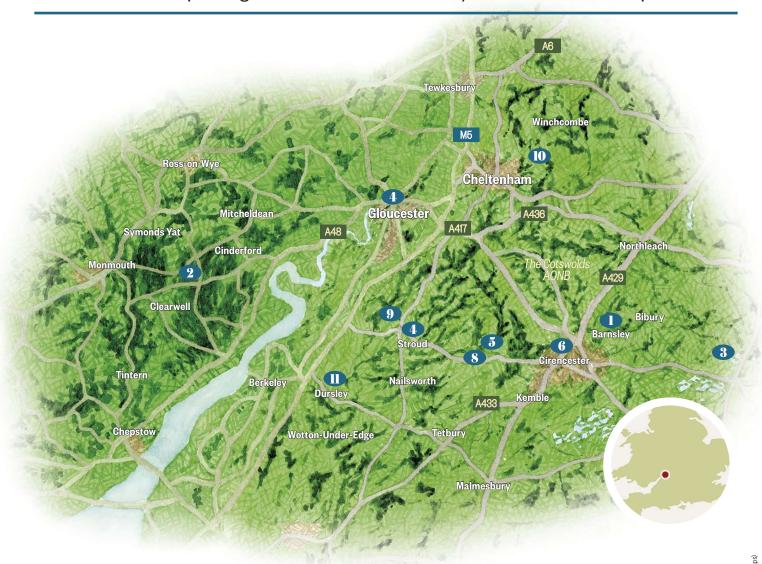
It's not easy seeking out the wild. Not least because there isn't that much of it, and we're now expected to enjoy a view of it from the path. It's even harder in an area which, when Googling 'wild Cotswolds,' produces the Wild Rabbit pub and the Cotswold Wildlife park as primary wild offerings. The value of finding wildness in our lives is beyond measure. It's the green connection that fires up the brain. But it's more than that: it's the mental reach back to our ancestors whose lives depended on wild places; and it's the spirit required to short-circuit modern hard-wiring, take that first step off the trail and forge our own paths through the land. 69



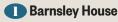
Countryfile presenter **Ellie Harrison** is president of the Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust and loves exploring the wild lands around her Cotswold home.

NOW GO THERE>

Ellie Harrison's handpicked gems in the Cotswolds and beyond - where to eat, sleep and ramble



WHERE TO STAY



This elegant country pile has sumptuous formal gardens and great local grub. Doubles from £200 a night. barnsleyhouse.com

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gloucestercathedral.org.uk



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subscriptionrooms.org.uk





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PERFECT PUBS

6 The Daneway

Sitting squarely at the bottom of Golden Valley, The Daneway is surrounded on most sides by wild nature reserves. A wander in summer gives you the chance to spot newly emerged large blue butterflies on the wing, one of very few places in the country where they flourish. Much of the food on your plate is grown in the garden and I thoroughly approve of the Daneway's G&Ts, served in handsome glassware. **Sapperton, GL7 6LN**

The Crown

Another beauty in Golden Valley is The Crown, a dream combination of pretty beer garden with a view for summer, with candles, fire and dogs allowed inside for winter. A 17th-century 'cider house' with 12 bedrooms for weary travellers, the Crown offers traditional home-cooked hearty fare. Blissfully, the menu doesn't assume all vegetarians are happy with one goats cheese option. **Frampton Mansell**, **GL6 8JG**, thecrowninn-cotswolds.co.uk

FARM SHOP

S Jolly Nice

In my childhood, this was the local Texaco Garage. But what a difference an imagination can make because it's now a high-end farm shop and coffee stop where it's impossible not to buy more than you went in for. Sit in cosy fireside yurts in winter or on picnic tables in the meadow in summer with a scoop of their famous, imaginatively flavoured ice cream.

Frampton Mansell, harrietsjollynice.co.uk



GREAT LOCAL WALKS



¶ Randwick, Haresfield Beacon and Standish Woods

This National Trust five-mile ramble leads you high onto the Cotswolds scarp and through the beech trees of Standish Woods before stopping for a breather high up at Haresfield Beacon. Blissful in summer. **bit.ly/2j6NnVE**



(II) Cleeve Hill

bit.ly/2c7lowz

Nature lovers flock to Cleeve Hill for the rare plants, butterflies and birds who love this limestone grassland. This four-mile walk, mapped out by Escape to the Cotswolds, winds past Cleeve Cloud, the highest point in the county.



Cam Long Down, Smallpox Hill

This four-mile ramble leads you around the intriguing Iron Age hill fort of Uley Bury to the more recent remains of the smallpox hospital which gave this hill its ominous name. From its top you can gaze over the Severn Estuary and into Wales.

bit.ly/2j5pGwt

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COUNTRYFILE MAGAZINE







ew things are more wonderful than a long, peaceful walk in the countryside,
with your dog bounding beside you, the sun shining and the birds singing.

Unfortunately, not all walks with our canine friends are this blissful. What if your dog runs off, refuses to return, or sets off in hot pursuit of something moving in the distance? A dog that gets out of control can raise the blood pressure and turn the walk into something that haunts the rest of your week.

The good news is that even intractable hounds can be trained and brought happily to heel with the right approach. With good preparation, most walks can – and should – be peaceful and happy. So how do we ensure we have a great walk with our dog – every time?

MANAGE EXPECTATIONS

Many dog owners have great expectations of good behaviour on a walk that are often not borne out in reality. A failure to train adequately in advance and then letting dogs off the lead too soon can result in many alarming encounters – especially with young, inexperienced dogs.

It is best to err on the side of caution and assume your dog knows little and is unreliable. You can then begin to build a firm foundation through training, allowing freedom only once it has been earned and you are sure of a response.



PLAY AWAY

A young, playful dog can get into trouble with wildlife, cars and livestock if taken on walks and left to its own devices. Such dogs are likely to find hunting games to play that involve stalking, chasing and pouncing.

It is better for both dog and owner to get into the habit of taking toys out, stopping at intervals and calling the dog back for a game. Your dog will then get all the hunting practice and fun it needs, and you have a resource to help with recalls – you are a key part of the walk, too. Also, many dogs end up at the vet each year, impaled by a thrown stick. Throwing toys is less likely to injure your dog.

RELIABLE RECALL

All dogs need to learn this if their owners are to have happy country walks. It's not enough that your dog come will come every time it is called in the garden for a biscuit, when nothing else is going on. The recall needs to be gradually proofed by practising with distractions, distance and calling while a dog is occupied in activities it would rather pursue instead.

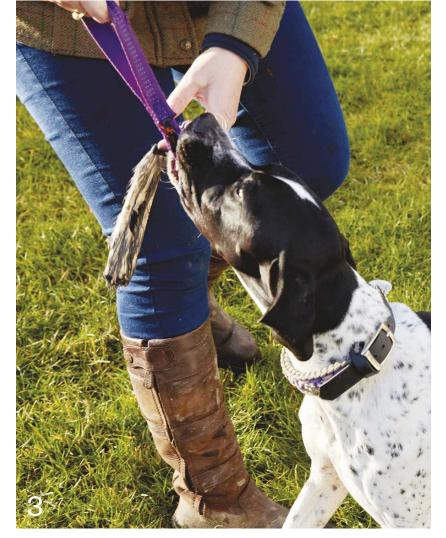
Many owners do the first part but don't do the proofing. This can result in your recall becoming unreliable as soon as the dog finds something interesting to do, whether as simple as following a scent trail, or as devastating as chasing livestock. For owners, this behaviour can be frustrating, but your obvious irritation will then keep your dog away.

TIPS TO HELP DEVELOP A RELIABLE RECALL

When training or proofing, only call (or whistle) when there is a good chance of success. Calling and being ignored sets training back, so try not to let this happen.

Teach your dog to recall at home, then in the garden, then in several safe open areas, until your dog runs to you every time.

Use a reward that your dog actually wants. Some dogs like food, some like



"Don't be stingy with rewards, or your dog may do its own thing rather than work for your low wages"



a high-value reward. Save the highest value reward for coming away from something they really want to do. And don't be stingy, otherwise your dog may do its own thing rather than work for your low 'wages'.

Once your dog knows the recall cue, practise in distracting circumstances and at different distances, being sure to stay within what you think your dog can achieve. As your dog gets more reliable, begin to call just as he finishes something he was engrossed in, such as sniffing an interesting area of grass. Gradually build this until you can call him away from things of interest.

games. Test out different things and rank in order of what your dog likes best. Don't rely on praise alone. Herding breeds or gun dogs may want to please but they may get enough love at home. Hounds are notorious for pleasing themselves, so ensuring that you have a pocket of warm sausage pieces can make the difference between success and failure.

OPPOSITE Gwen training her dog on reliable recall CLOCKWISE FROM TOP

Playing games helps your dog see you as the source of entertainment; ensure rewards are desirable; a key test of command is whether your dog will return when you call it while it is occupied in something of interest

Find a reward that fits the effort involved.

If your dog has to come from a long
way, or in distracting circumstance, give

WHEN TO RECALL

Try to get into the habit of calling your dog back to you whenever you see another walker approaching. Some walkers won't appreciate being touched or sniffed by your dog, or at worst, jumped on. So let your dog know that you have good rewards available for coming to you when it sees a person in the distance and then be sure to reward well with praise, a game or a favourite treat, so that your dog doesn't feel it's missing out on fun with the stranger and will be happy to oblige every time.

Think hard about when to let your dog off-lead. If you can't see all the boundaries of the field •

you're in, what might appear over the horizon, and can you call your dog away from it? If unsure, it's better to keep your dog on a lead until you are sure. Carefully choose when and where to let your dog off, according to his level of reliability. Keep well below threshold for safety.

As with all training, a good coach can help and so finding a professional dog trainer for help and support is a really good idea. A good trainer can also help you to teach your dog an emergencysit and a chase-recall, both really useful control measures once your dog is out of your reach. This high-level training will give you much more peace of mind on walks, just in case your dog takes off after something it sees in the distance, or a deer pops out of a hedge unexpectedly.

PLAN YOUR ROUTE

Knowing how reliable your dog's recall is, as well as what its reaction will be to things you may encounter on the walk (livestock, other dogs, walkers, horses, tractors) will allow you to plan routes that are more likely to be successful. Avoiding potential trouble spots, such as parks with children, popular areas with other walkers and dogs, or woods with deer and rabbits may be best until you have more control.

We all have to act responsibly outdoors but dog owners have additional responsibility to ensure their dog does not cause a nuisance. Keeping to public routes and footpaths is essential but beware of stiles in fences where there is no dog access hatch if your dog doesn't jump and can't be lifted over. Avoid areas with





TOP In residential areas, it's wise to keep dogs on leads for peace of mind **ABOVE** Think about how you'll provide water for your dog on a long walk

ground-nesting birds at breeding time as well as places with pregnant or young livestock or pheasant-rearing areas. Keep off crops and avoid fields margins recently sprayed with pesticide that could adversely affect your dog.

While planning your route, think about how to provide water for your dog on a hot day, do you need hi-viz jackets if walking on lanes in poor visibility and do you need to avoid shooting areas if your dog is noise-phobic? Preparation allows you to relax and enjoy the walk. And, of course, planning a stop at a dog-friendly pub could make a good walk even happier. 69



Gwen Bailey has been a dog behaviourist and trainer for more than 30 years and has written 13 books on the subject. She is director of Puppy School, a UK network of trainers who work with more than 6,000 puppies a year. puppyschool.co.uk



DOGS AND LIVESTOCK

Dogs are descended from wild ancestors that hunted prey animals to survive. It is not surprising that genes handed down to our pet dogs make hunting behaviour high on the list of 'fun' activities for them.

Slowly acclimatising a puppy to farm animals can make a difference to whether they view them as something to be ignored or something to be chased.

Providing hunting games with toys can reduce a dog's desire to 'play' with other animals. And keeping your dog on a lead around livestock will ensure they are under control and can't get into trouble.

Staying safe while crossing fields where cows and horses are grazing requires you to be mindful of how these animals feel about you. If cows have calves to protect, they may resent a dog being in the field, so it is best to avoid this situation altogether.

Young bullocks, full of curiosity and energy, often only want to investigate. Keep your distance whenever you can, but if they run towards you, walk confidently towards them and don't run away. If you feel really threatened, it's best to let your dog off the lead so it can find its own escape.

Horses are generally animals of flight but a curious horse that isn't afraid of humans may want to get closer than you feel comfortable with. It is usually easy to shoo them away but don't be too aggressive.

Sheep usually want to stay well away from dogs, although some will slowly begin to follow you as you cross their field, making it more difficult to control an excitable dog that isn't used to them. Be sure to keep your dog on a lead near to sheep so you have full control and peace of mind.



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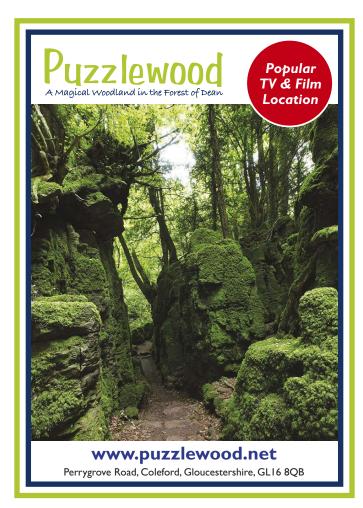
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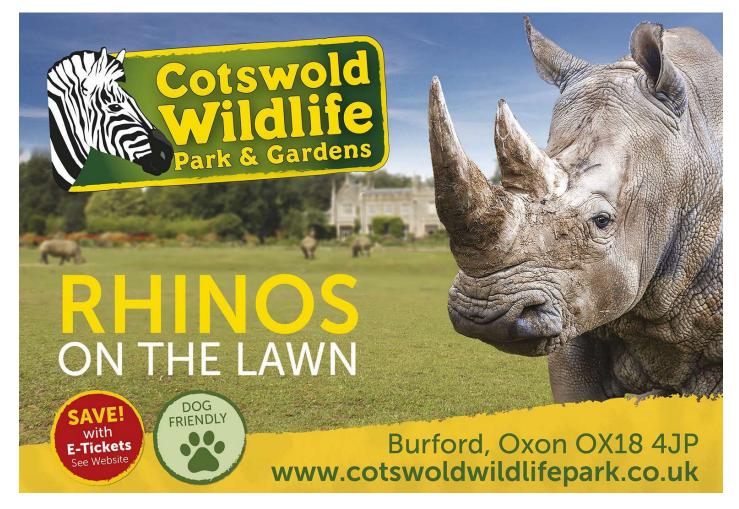
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WILD PEOPLE: MILLICAN DALTON

Professor of adventure

Millican Dalton gave up a comfortable office job to live wild in the Lake District, setting up home in a cave. **Roly Smith** marks the 150th anniversary of the pioneering adventurer's birth

eep within many of us is an unspoken desire to give up our mundane, everyday, nine-to-five existence – and take off to live closer to nature in the wilderness. Few of us, however, have the courage to do it. But Millican Dalton left his well-paid job to do just that.

At the age of 36, Dalton decided that office life was stifling him. He once told a journalist: "I longed to be free. I gave up my job and ever since I have camped out. Today I live rent free, rate free, tax free. It's the only kind of life worth living."

Dalton fled to the Lake District,

where he spent his summers living in a cave and earning the impressive nickname, 'the Professor of Adventure'. And so a legend was born.

"To be free is the only kind of life worth living"

In his late teens, Dalton started cycle-camping trips with his brothers and friends to the Lake District, Wales and Scotland. He landed a job as a fire insurance clerk for the Union Assurance Company in the City, which paid him enough to fund his many camping holidays to the hills. Eventually, he acquired land in North Weald and later in Billericay, Essex, where he lived in a tent and commuted the 20 miles to London every day.

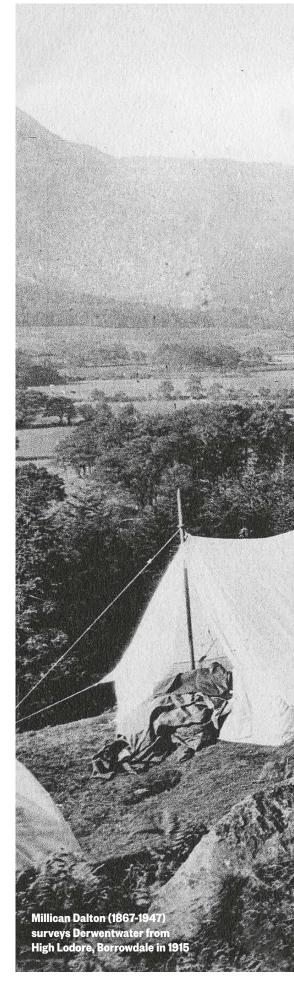
He soon came to realise, as he wrote in the *Fell & Rock Club Journal* of 1913: "Camping provides the compleatest (sic) possible change from ordinary civilised town existence, and, being the

healthiest kind of life as well as the jolliest and most unconventional, is the best antidote to the rush and stress of city work."

THE EPIPHANY

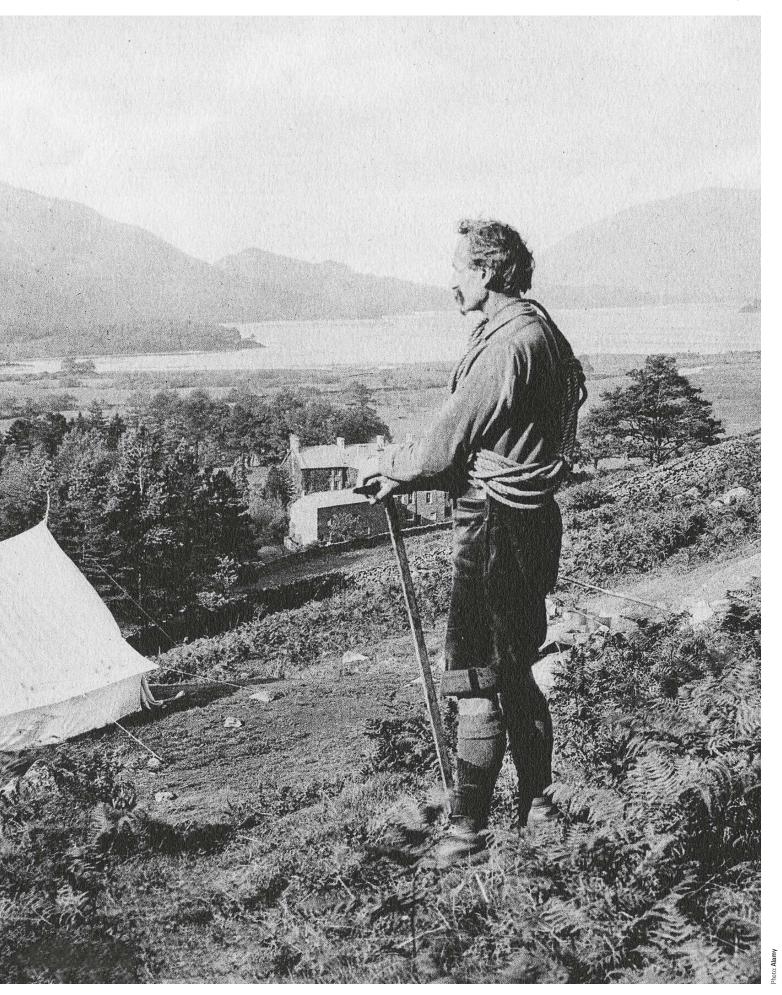
Dalton's Damascene moment came around 1904 when he finally answered the call of the wild and left Essex for Borrowdale. There he set up a guiding business based at a camp at High Lodore, at the southern end of Derwentwater. This was, he wrote: "One of my favourite camps, on a steep fell side... commanding a perfect view of a perfect lake... framed by mountains on each side, with the purple bulk of Skiddaw in the distance."

Dalton advertised his services as: 'Camping Holidays, Mountain Rapid Shooting, Rafting', adding somewhat



EXPLORING ROOTS

Dalton was born in the bleak Pennine village of Nenthead, the sixth of seven children. He was just seven years old when his father died. Schooled first at Wigton, on the northern edge of the Lake District, his family later moved south, to Middlesex and then Essex. It was here, in Epping Forest, that Millican and his brothers Joseph and Henry first camped and climbed (up trees, rather than mountains – an activity he called "boling").





alarmingly, 'Hairbreadth Escapes'. His two-week camping tours included rock climbing, for those of an adventurous nature. The total cost for the holiday in 1913 was £3, or 25s (£1.25p) for camping, meals and walking tours only.

Every year for almost half a century, Dalton migrated to the milder climes of the south of England for the winter, returning to the Lake District for the summer. With small groups of friends, he also took expeditions to places such as the Austrian Tyrol, Wales and Scotland where, with his brother Henry, he made the first ascent of the formidable 225m (740ft) Pencoed Pillar in Snowdonia.

He soon acquired that title 'Professor of Adventure', a name given to him by his friends and clients, but he was often addressed simply as 'The Skipper'.

Dalton's appearance was striking. Over six feet tall and skeleton-thin, he had a long, ranging stride and piercing blue eyes set in a tanned face that sported a goatee beard. He was never seen without a Woodbine cigarette hanging from the corner of his mouth, and his fingers were stained yellow from the nicotine.



"He was often addressed simply as 'The Skipper"

His clothing consisted of a battered Tyrolean hat usually with a pheasant feather, an old khaki or green jacket and rolled-up shorts, protected at the rear with a sewn-on patch of canvas, which acted as a groundsheet when he sat down. He wound a pair of old army

LEFT Even as a young man, Dalton lived simply. He wrote: "Use is everything. We dress too much, we eat too much, almost everything we do is too much. Put a man to it and see what he can come up with" OPPOSITE AND BELOW His Tyrolean hat and a Woodbine were ever present

puttees around his legs from his ankles to his knobbly knees. On his feet he wore leather boots handmade in Keswick by Fred Birkett of St John Street, who used Dalton's image to advertising his product.

Apparently personal hygiene was not top of Dalton's priorities when camping, and the combination of tobacco, wood smoke and general body odour prompted one observer to advise that it was always best to approach him from upwind.

One of the best descriptions of Dalton came from his friend Horace Walpole, the New Zealand-born novelist who lived on the opposite shore of Derwentwater. Walpole is thought to have modelled the vagrant George Endicott on Millican Dalton in his epic family saga *Rogue Herries*, first published in 1930:

He was a man with a thin dry face, long shaggy black hair, a coat and breeches of some colour that had faded to a dirty green. He looked like part of the fell. His legs were thin and long and sharp. He was not young – 50 years of age maybe.

The man was, from his voice, not from the North. His tone was firm, quiet, reflective... He was of great height and very thin with a long nose.

To confirm the characterisation, Walpole wrote that Endicott lived in "not indeed quite a cave, but rather the opening of some deserted entrance to a long-neglected mine".

COFFEE AT THE CAVE HOTEL

Dalton had moved into the 'Cave Hotel' at Castle Crag around 1914, as the First World War was breaking out in Europe. A passionate pacifist, he became a conscientious objector. He wrote to his good friend Dr Mabel Barker, a leading female rock climber: "I wonder when, if ever, the British government will have the sense to propose peace."

The lower cave at Castle Crag extends into the hill by about 27m (90ft), and the upper cave, known to Dalton as



The Attic, is about half that size. It was well equipped with recycled materials mainly obtained from the dump at Grange, hung from wires suspended from the roof or walls. Among that equipment was a sewing machine, which Dalton used to make his own clothing, rucksacks and tents.

A roaring fire of larch, juniper, yew and holly gleaned from neighbouring High Hows Wood burned constantly, keeping the cave snug and warm, and providing heat for cooking. A fissure in the roof of the cave provided running water. A cup of steaming hot coffee – another of Dalton's addictions – was always ready to welcome his guests.

PATHWAY TO THE STARS

The Professor of Adventure became a familiar character in Lakeland life, referred to by the distinguished *Guardian* Country Diarist, A Harry Griffin, as "one of the most remarkable men in Cumberland" and by Alfred Wainwright as "a mountaineering adventurer". Dalton eventually retired from guiding at the age of 75, but continued to make his summer visits to the Lake District. His main winter

home became a hut that he built after buying land in Marlow Bottom in the Chiltern Hills. He called it High Heavens Camp, after the beech wood under which it sheltered.

In the long-remembered, bitterly cold winter of 1947, Dalton's hut burned down, and he became ill and was admitted to Amersham Hospital, where he died of heart failure, bronchitis and pneumonia in February at the age of 79. His journal based on 30 years of wild living, entitled *Philosophy of Life*, remains lost to this day.

Many tributes were paid to Dalton after his death. His life-long friend and climbing partner, Keswick photographer Ralph Mayson, wrote in the 1947 edition of the Fell & Rock Club Journal: "After a day on the hills with him, or just pottering about, one had a feeling of contented happiness and peace of mind, proving the simple things in life to be most lasting."



Roly Smith is an outdoors writer and keen walker known as 'Mr Peak District'



IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF DALTON

That connoisseur of the Lake District fells, Alfred Wainwright, described the square mile centred on Castle Crag, the sharp-toothed incisor in the Jaws of Borrowdale, as "the loveliest in Lakeland".

Generations of fell-wanderers have followed in Wainwright's boot-prints to enter the tight little wooded valley of Borrowdale, where Millican Dalton made his summer home in his 'Cave Hotel' on the eastern flank of Castle Crag for more than 30 years.

The quarried-out cave in the vertically tilted Ordovician volcanic rocks is easily found off the former quarrymen's tracks up from Rosthwaite or Grange in the valley of the Derwent. Inscribed on the inside wall of the cave are words that may represent his motto in life: "Don't!! Waste words. Jump to conclusions." The former quarry road that served Rigghead Quarry on the crag is also an excellent route to Seatoller and Honister – routes that Dalton must have known well.

Among his other favourite Lake District haunts were the caves on Dove Nest Crag on Glaramara, a couple of miles further up the dale, where he recorded several first ascents. Dalton also loved the Wasdale valley and a particular favourite stamping ground was Great Gable, where he climbed Napes Needle at least once every year for half a century.





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- Free time to explore Inverness, the capital of the Highlands

THE RHINE & MOSELLE RAIL & WINE TRAIL

DEPARTS: Sundays 18 June, 20 August & 17 September 2017



- ★ Standard Class rail travel to Germany and return
- ★ Stay in the heart of the Rhine Gorge UNESCO World Heritage site
- ★ Visit Rüdesheim, with lunch and winetasting at a local wine cellar

- ★ Cruise the Loreley Valley, partly by steamer, visiting St Goar and Bacharach
- ★ Discover Assmannshausen's wines with a winetasting at your hotel
- Visit the spa town of
 Wiesbaden and ride the
 Nerobergbahn funicular railway
- Enjoy a tasting of 'Sekt' sparkling wine at the Weingut Barth
- ★ Take the scenic rail journey along the Moselle Valley to Cochem
- ★ Cruise the Moselle and taste Moselle wines with a winetasting

BARCELONA, CARCASSONNE & THE CATALAN COAST

DEPARTS: Fridays 9 June & 15 September 2017



- ★ First Class rail travel to/from Perpignan, including Standard Premier Eurostar
- ★ Visit enchanting Collioure
- ★ Explore the coves of the Catalan Coast

- ★ Winetasting of local wines
- ★ Relax in the Mediterranean resort of Argelès-sur-Mer
- ★ Travel into the Pyrenees aboard the scenic 'Petit Train Jaune'
- ★ Enjoy a traditional French market day
- ★ Visit exciting Barcelona, the proud capital of Catalonia
- ★ Visit the perfect medieval walled city of Carcassonne
- ★ Enjoy a home-made Cassoulet, the regional speciality

CANALS, STEAM & HISTORIC CHESTER

DEPARTS: Sundays 9 April, 14 May, 11 June, 16 July & 8 October 2017



* Explore the world of canals at Ellesmere Port, as the heyday of narrow boats comes alive

- ★ Anderton Boat Lift, marvel of Victorian engineering
- Masterpiece of the canals, breathtaking Pontcysyllte Aqueduct
- ★ Llangollen Steam Railway nostalgia
- ★ 2000 years of history in the beautiful city of Chester
- ★ Relax strolling waterside paths and ancient city walls
- ★ Stay in the heart of Chester, at one of north England's finest grand marque hotels

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DEPARTS: Wednesdays 21 June, 12 July 16 August & 13 September 2017



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- Ride the Furka Steam Railway

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 Express
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- Lunch at the Schilthorn summit – James Bond 007 mountain
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- ★ Coffee & cake at the Panorama Restaurant at Harder Kulm
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DEPARTS: Thursday 28 September 2017



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COUNTRYFILE ISSUES

JOHN CRAVEN

CAN GARDEN VILLAGES RESOLVE THE HOUSING CRISIS?

round 1,300 English villages have vanished since the start of this century. They were not swallowed by the sea, by floodwater or sinkholes, or beamed into outer space. No, they were simply absorbed into neighbouring towns and larger villages, caught up in the urban sprawl and often deprived of their identity.

Scores of new homes have gone up in my village – and the nearby town seems ever closer. But not long ago, the opposite was true across much of the countryside, with local councils opposing development in villages.

Stagnation was the big threat, with no new affordable housing for local young families and little opportunity for older residents who needed to downsize.

DRIVING THE POINT HOME

What changed things was the stark reality that the nation was not building enough homes, with three million more needed – and many would have to be in the countryside. Yet coincidentally, we have all been given a greater say in the destiny of the places we call home. Since 2011, local communities have been able to draw up their neighbourhood plan, outlining how they'd like to see the future in terms of housing, employment, education, facilities, transport and their environment.

These are then incorporated into the local plan of the district authority, which is vetted by Government planning inspectors to ensure they comply with policy. Where I live, about 100 villagers



Will the 'garden villages' announced by the Government follow the example of Letchworth Garden City in Hertfordshire?

"There is no clear perception of what communities want"

spent four years compiling in great detail the neighbourhood plan that has now been accepted by the parish council and awaits higher approval. It's an example of grassroots action – but fewer than 250 neighbourhood plans have been submitted and many councils have yet to complete their local plan.

Planning experts tell me that, as a result of this tardiness, there is no clear perception of what communities want, so developers are putting on pressure to get more greenfield sites approved and more villages are being swallowed. No one is questioning the need for house-building but it has to be in the right place,

where the infrastructure can cope and existing communities are not disregarded.

WORKING VILLAGES

Perhaps one way ahead is being signposted by the 14 garden villages to be built from Cumbria to Cornwall, all self-contained with their own facilities and providing a total of up 48,000 homes. In its announcement, the Government says it will respond to local housing needs, especially for first-time buyers. Housing minister Gavin Barwell told the BBC that the villages would have "jobs, but also school places, GP surgeries and the transport infrastructure that make these places, not just dormitory suburbs". And there could be more in the future.

"Well-planned garden villages would be preferable to the poor-quality rural developments currently being plonked down over much of the countryside against the wishes of local people," says Shaun Spiers, chief executive of the Campaign to Protect Rural England.

Several of the garden villages will be on brownfield sites such as old airfields but others will eat into the greenbelt. And one of the three new green towns also announced would, according to the CPRE, engulf a village and a hamlet and "herald the death knell of the rural character of whole swathes of Hertfordshire". Where have we heard that before?



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SPECIAL REPORT

HOW TO LIVE A GREENER LIFE

Words: Mark Rowe

e are bombarded with reports and news stories about pollution, wildlife declines, climate change and other environmental concerns. But as individuals we can often feel daunted and helpless about what we can do. So we asked a range of environmental and countryside organisations for their advice. Everyone – if they want to – can do their bit in small but meaningful ways and often save money. Here are 10 simple steps you can take in everyday life...

Don't flush away plastics, wet wipes and phosphates

Trillions of tiny pieces of plastic accumulate in the world's oceans, lakes and estuaries, harming marine life and entering the food chain. Up to 219,000 tonnes of microplastics enter European waters every year and have been found on sea beds and in Arctic ice.

Much of this comes from products flushed down plug holes and toilets, such as wet wipes and the microbeads found in many skincare products. Try to use scrubs and peels with sand, salt or coconut rather than plastics particles. Washing-up liquids and detergents containing phosphates behave like fertilisers in water, encouraging algal blooms that suffocate aquatic wildlife.



Sources National Trust; Soil Association; Sustain; Wildlife Trusts; Keep Britain Tidy; Love Food Hate Waste; Recyclenow.com; Energy Saving Trust; Children's Food Trust; Garden Organic; The Journal of Public Health; Waterwise; UK Government Environmental Audit Committee; MCS; Canal & River Trust; National Allotment Society.

2 BUY MORE SEASONAL AND LOCAL FOOD

Air freighting fresh produce long distances has more than trebled in the past 20 years

This uses energy in transport, storage and building roads. Supporting local food producers cuts down on food miles and many other costs to the environment.





3 Recycle more

and Edinburgh.

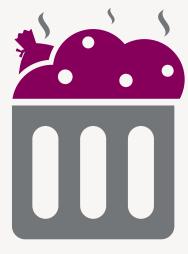
Recycling of waste collected from households across the UK has fallen for the first time since records began. In the UK more than half a million tonnes of metal packaging and nearly 2 million tonnes of glass packaging are recycled per year. If we recycle all the steel packaging we used in a year, the energy saved would power 50,000 return train journeys between London

The majority of everyday household items, from aerosols to toner cartridges and white goods, can now be recycled either via kerbside collections or at local authority amenity sites.

4 Cut down on food waste

More than **7m tonnes of food and drink are wasted in the UK each**

year and on average every person in England produces seven times their own weight in waste a year. If we all stopped wasting food that could have been eaten, the benefit to the planet would be the equivalent of taking 1 in 4 cars off the road. Use what food you do waste to make a compost heap. If you can't do that but need compost, then buy peat-free compost: multi-purpose compost is usually taken from peat layers that make up lowland raised bogs, which are important wildlife habitats.



hotos: Gettv



5 Drive less

56% of car journeys are under five miles and more than 50,000 people a year die prematurely as a result of air pollution

This is linked to either inhaling minute particles of oily, unburnt soot emitted by all petrol engines or from nitrogen dioxide emitted by diesel engines. Several urban streets in the UK broke their annual air pollution limits before the end of January. By law, hourly levels of toxic nitrogen dioxide must not be more than 200 micrograms per cubic metre more than 18 times in a whole year. If you can, cycle or walk shorter journeys – it may take longer but it will save you money, parking is easier and it's excellent exercise.

6 GROW YOUR OWN FOOD

Devoting gardens and local land to growing food can help prevent water run-off and flooding. It also produces cleaner air, as well as high-quality crops with almost zero food miles.

There are about 330,000 allotment plots in the UK and enough demand for a further 90,000.

Studies show that allotment gardeners enjoy better selfesteem and general health and experience less depression and fatigue. Wildlife does well, too.





7 Support the countryside

Shop locally when exploring the UK and encourage supermarket chains to source more of their goods locally. Make it known to farmers and conservation organisations that you appreciate the work they do, the wildlife they support and the landscapes they manage.

Find out about the methods they use and the standards they work to. Try to get to personally know the farmers that supply your food – for example, through farmer's markets. The more money spent with local outlets, the more stays in the local area, helping to support local jobs.



8 Reduce water use

The UK has less available water per person than most other European countries – and the more water consumed, the less there is for the wider environment. The poor condition of many of our rivers (just 0.08% of England's rivers are high quality), wetlands and bays is due in part to the high levels of water extracted. If the adult population of England and Wales turned off taps when not in use, it would save 180 megalitres a day. Duel flush toilets typically use 4-6 litres of water compared to older systems that use 13-15 litres per flush. Reuse bathwater to water plants.

9 Insulate your home

Grants are often available for cavity wall/loft insulation – about a third of all heat lost in an insulated home escapes through the walls.

Professional draught-proofing of windows, doors and blocking cracks in floors and skirting boards can save £35 a year on energy bills; a chimney draught excluder can save £25 a year.

For heating, install a room thermostat and thermostatic radiator valves and you could save £155 a year. Turning down the room thermostat by one degree can save £85 a year.





10 SAVE MORE ELECTRICITY

Most electricity generation still requires burning fossil fuels and contributes to climate change. But there are ways to cut demand and save money. UK households spend £30 a year powering appliances in standby

mode. When replacing old appliances, look for products with the best energy rating. Save energy by defrosting the fridge regularly. Replace incandescent bulbs with compact fluorescents. Only fill the kettle with the exact amount of water that you need.



Have your say...

What do you think?
Write to the address

on page 3 or email

editor@countryfile.com





Spring BREAKS

Feeling in need of a good dose of fresh air in the great outdoors? Take advantage of budding spring days by escaping to these enchanting beauty spots for a spell, says **Bridgid Benson**

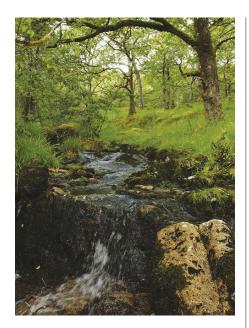
BOWERS OF FLOWERS HARTLAND PENINSULA, NORTH DEVON

Experience the magic of a carpet of vibrant English bluebells at Hartland Abbey on the north Devon coast, where the woodland garden is cloaked in sapphire all the way to the shore of the Atlantic Ocean.

A former home of Augustinian monks, handsome Hartland was the last English abbey to be dissolved by Henry VIII. In spring, winding woodland paths lead to glades of rare camellias and majestic magnolias in bloom. The air is heavy with bluebell scent and sweet with birdsong. Historic species of daffodils and gentle violets shine out of the grass like jewels.

Enjoy a traditional Devon cream tea in the Old Kitchen at the Abbey or perhaps a picnic at nearby Blackpool Mill, a secluded cove backed by cliffs. Low tide reveals sand, rock pools and fascinating geological formations. From here, the South West Coast Path leads to the lighthouse and dramatic cliffs at Hartland Point where the Bristol Channel and Atlantic Ocean meet.

WHERE TO STAY Kittiwakes Coastal Cabin is a sweet retreat on a family farm offering sweeping clifftop views of the Atlantic Ocean. Two-day breaks from £90. kittiwakescoastalcabin.co.uk



EMERALD RAINFOREST SUNART OAKWOODS, ARDNAMURCHAN, ARGYLL

Rare Atlantic oak woods are especially beautiful in spring. After winter's deep sleep, gentle sunlight filters through treetops to encourage unfurling leaves and nest-building birds in song.

Recognised as temperate rainforest and associated with more than 500 species of plants and animals, the Atlantic oakwoods on the southern shore of Loch Sunart are lush with ferns, lichens and mosses and alive with great spotted woodpeckers, red deer, red squirrels and pine martens.

An elevated boardwalk winds to the beautiful Garbh Eilean wildlife hide. Binoculars and telescopes are provided to observe the wildlife, including harbour porpoise, otters and seals basking in the sun on nearby islands.

Shoreline sea fishing from the rocks along Loch Sunart is free; species include mackerel, cod, pollock and wrasse. For experienced walkers, a challenging 10-mile route up Ben Resipole delivers breathtaking views to the Small Isles and over to the Isle of Skye.

scotland.forestry.gov.uk

WHERE TO STAY The family-run Strontian Hotel offers great loch and mountain views, cosy rooms and tasty traditional cuisine in The Bothy Bar and Restaurant. Dogs are welcome and there's a drying room for wet weather kit. Twin room from £80 a night. thestrontianhotel.co.uk

BEWITCHING COAST BOSHERSTON PONDS. SOUTH PEMBROKESHIRE

Lengthening spring days are perfect for coastal walks in spectacular scenery and the loop around the National Trust's Stackpole Estate in south Pembrokeshire does not disappoint. Allow at least three hours for this favourite ramble, which has easily enough charms for a full day.

The route from Bosherston lily ponds, created in flooded limestone valleys as part of Stackpole's original ornamental gardens, leads to sandy Broadhaven South beach and the grassland of Stackpole Warren, studded with cowslips in spring.

Walking towards Stackpole Head, Lundy Island is visible on the distant horizon. Seals bob in foaming waves and seabirds

nest on high limestone cliffs. Turning inland, the path passes through dappled woodland before reaching the idyllic paradise beach at Barafundle Bay.

From here, it's a short stroll to one of the smallest harbours in Britain at Stackpole Quay and welcome refreshments at the Boathouse Café. The lovely loop returns to Bosherston across the back of Stackpole Warren. nationaltrust.org.uk/stackpole

WHERE TO STAY The award-winning and attractive Stackpole Inn does a fine line in delicious food and four tasteful en-suite bedrooms. Doubles from £60 a night. stackpoleinn.co.uk









SPECTACULAR SEABIRDS BEMPTON CLIFFS, YORKSHIRE

Extraordinary seabird sights and sounds make the RSPB reserve at Bempton a thrilling springtime destination. Extending five kilometres along the coast, towering white chalk sea cliffs resound to the raucous chatter and activity of up to 250,000 breeding seabirds.

Sturdy viewing platforms overhang the cliffs to peer directly into the incredible world of England's largest seabird gathering. And on a warm spring breeze, a whiff of pungent fishy seabird smells is an unexpected bonus.

Gannets, guillemots, fulmars, razorbills, herring gulls, shags, kittiwakes and burrowing puffins all the nest on the cliffs – the latter are a big hit with visitors. To increase the chance of seeing these hugely popular birds, the RSPB offer daily Puffin Patrols at 11am. Midweek patrols are adult-only; weekend patrols are suitable for families. rspb.org.uk

Stalled by a wet weather day? Along the coast at Bridlington you will find the fascinating Amy Johnson room at Sewerby Hall. It celebrates the first female pilot to fly alone from Britain to Australia (in an aircraft without lights, radio or fuel gauge). On display are her medals, cloth helmet and alarmingly flimsy flying suit.

sewerbyhall.co.uk

WHERE TO STAY Rockville Farm Cottages is a short walk from the RSPB reserve. Each cottage offers creature comforts in renovated farm buildings. Three-night break from £160. rockvillefarmcottages.co.uk



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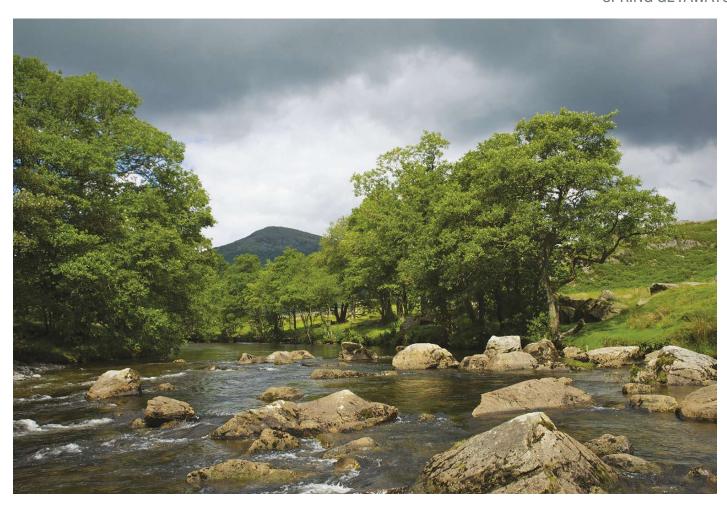
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WORDSWORTH'S DELIGHT RIVER DUDDON, CUMBRIA

William Wordsworth was so inspired by the Duddon Valley in southern Lakeland that he composed a series of sonnets celebrating the unspoiled landscape through which the splashy River Duddon wriggles like a snake.

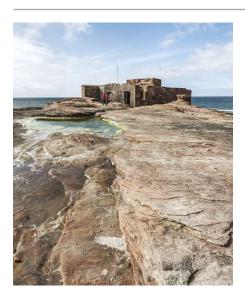
Tucked between Eskdale and Coniston, this favourite valley offers great walking alongside the gurgling beck or high up on the fells. On a clear spring day, an expedition to the jagged rock teeth of Swinside Neolithic stone circle is especially rewarding; the views of Scafell Pike, Dunnerdale and the River Duddon's journey to the sea are magnificent.

Intrepid spring lambs provide much entertainment and the landscape resounds to the bleat of woolly youngsters who have momentarily lost sight of mum.

Deep pools near the hamlet of Ulpha make for fantastically lazy river swimming

on hotter spring days, or set up a sumptuous picnic on one of the large boulders sitting midstream and watch delightful, darting kingfishers and bobbing dippers.

WHERE TO STAY Remote and peaceful Woodend House offers self catering or B&B stays in the Buttery, Bothy and Schoolhouse cottages, which all have wood-burning stoves and wi-fi. Doubles from £40 a night. woodendhouse.co.uk



ISLAND ADVENTURES HILBRE, MERSEYSIDE

Spring is a great time to pack a picnic, rug and binoculars and visit the trio of Hilbre Islands at the mouth of the Dee estuary between England and Wales.

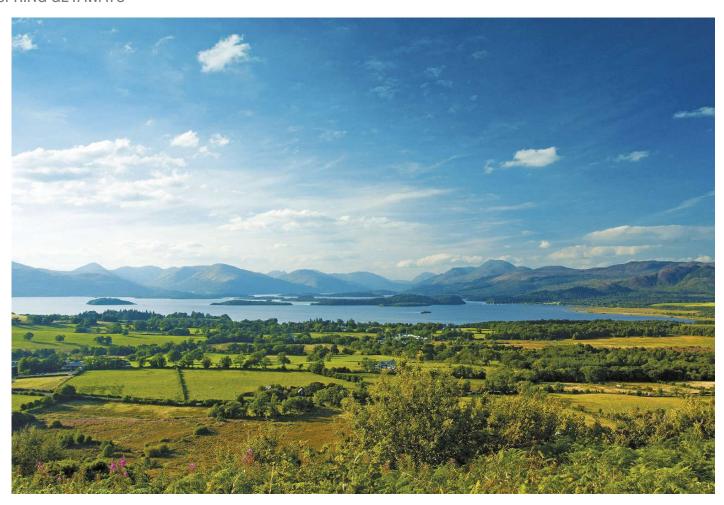
The walk from West Kirby to Little Eye, Middle Eye and Hilbre takes around an hour over flat, wet sand – so sturdy boots are a good idea. It is essential to check tide times and keep to the dogleg route, which avoids sinking sand. Find information on noticeboards at West Kirby beach.

The easy crossing is a great adventure for all the family. From the islands, a stunning sweep of coastal scenery includes the peaks of west Snowdonia, the Great Orme at Llandudno, the Isle of Anglesey and Liverpool Bay. Look out for grey seals hauled out on sandbanks, their eerie moans carrying on the wind.

Without shops or facilities, the uninhabited wild islands feel like a total escape. Pack all you need in your rucksack and you'll return with rosy cheeks and fantastic memories.

where to stay 42 Caldy Road B&B. Perfectly situated for coastal walks on the Wirral peninsula, this elegant townhouse offers stunning Dee estuary and sunset views from the guest lounge. Doubles from £95 a night. 42caldyroad.co.uk

notos: Alamy, Getty



PANORAMIC SCENERY DUNCRYNE HILL, GARTOCHARN

One of Scotland's loveliest sights is the unforgettable vista from the top of Duncryne Hill, a hike achieved by most walkers in less than 30 minutes.

The one-mile ascent of the volcanic plug, known fondly as The Dumpling, is a steep challenge on a well-marked path, yet the view on a clear spring day is so awesome that there will be plenty of time to catch your breath while soaking up the Highland panorama of Scotland's first National Park.

At just 141m above sea level, Duncryne looks beyond Loch Lomond's shores and 30 wooded islands towards the Arrochar Alps. The famous mountains of Ben Vorlich, Ben Lomond and Ben Arthur are all on the scene, often still snow-capped in spring. From Duncryne, a short trip will take you to

the cruise boats and Highland shopping at the Loch Lomond Shores Visitor Centre. **lochlomondshores.com**

WHERE TO STAY Ardoch Cottage is a short walk from The Dumpling. Good quality bed and breakfast accommodation, views to Ben Lomond and a crackling log fire in the guest lounge. Doubles from £76 a night. ardochcottage.co.uk



DOWN BY THE CREEK MERSEA ISLAND, ESSEX

Welcome spring with a jaunt to the coast of southeast Essex, where mudflats and saltmarshes, quirky houseboats and rows of pretty beach huts give Mersea Island an atmosphere all of its own.

Connected to the mainland by
The Strood tidal causeway, Mersea is just
five miles long by two wide. Its two hubs
differ in character. East Mersea is a tranquil
hamlet surrounded by farmland with views
of wildfowl and waders on the tidal mudflats
of the Colne and Blackwater estuaries.
West Mersea is a charming, low-key resort
– the place to build sandcastles, enjoy
harbour boat trips and dine out on sweet
and delicate native Colchester oysters,

washed down with wine from the island vineyard. From West Mersea, the circular walk of 13 miles around the island is a great way to enjoy the salty estuary air.

WHERE TO STAY For the authentic Mersey experience, Mojo Houseboat B&B offers a cabin with a glass ceiling to the stars and breakfast in the company of oystercatchers. Boat hire from £125 a night.mojoatmersea.co.uk



Bridgid Benson is a writer and curious traveller and the author of 52 Weekends by the Sea and 52 Weekends in the Country.



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TREASURE HUNTERS

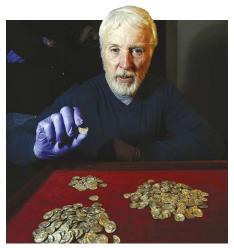
For years, detectorists quietly went about the business of searching for gold in the countryside, until a spate of ancient finds put them in the spotlight. **lan Vince** looks at the pleasures and pains of metal-detecting life...

ou've probably noticed them from the road as you passed by in the car. Purposefully pacing up and down a field, sweeping detectors from side to side, the treasure hunters look for all the world like a forensics unit on dress-down Friday. This interesting assortment of characters, sporting everything from a paramilitary look to the trusty beard-and-jumper combo, are united by their passion for detectoring.

This countryside pursuit has a growing appeal, not least due to the media coverage of discoveries of enormous hoards of coins and golden Anglo-Saxon treasures. But there's more to this tribe of people who spend their spare time searching for buried gold and silver than meets the eye.

Paul Coleman found himself the focus of one such media storm last year, after he found more than 5,000 Anglo-Saxon coins buried in a lead container in a Buckinghamshire field. The realisation that he was about to unearth a major find dawned on him gradually as his metal detector began to beep.

"You can gauge the size of the buried metal by listening to the sound. This was a loud signal, and I could tell the object was quite large, but you can't really know for sure until you dig. As I dug further down, the signal seemed to indicate it was getting larger and larger. By the time I had gone to two feet, I could tell that whatever I was about to unearth was huge."



Paul Coleman, holding one of the 5,200 Anglo-Saxon coins he discovered in the village of Lenborough, Buckinghamshire

"It's never boring because it's the quiet times that make the lucky catch worthwhile"

Paul's story is in distinct contrast to most metal-detecting experiences, according to Peter Welch, who runs the 1,000-strong Weekend Wanderers Detecting Club and who was on the scene with Paul when he made his find.

"Lots of people try detectoring and get disappointed quite quickly when it turns out that it's not a path to instant riches, that they have to put in the time walking up and down fields," says Peter. "But some of us are there

really to relax, and swinging a metal detector provides a purpose for a walk in the country."

Perseverance, says Paul, is key. "It's never boring because, like fishing, it's the quiet times that make that lucky catch worthwhile. Like angling, or cricket, very little happens for a long time and then you get the big reward. And the time between those moments increases the anticipation."

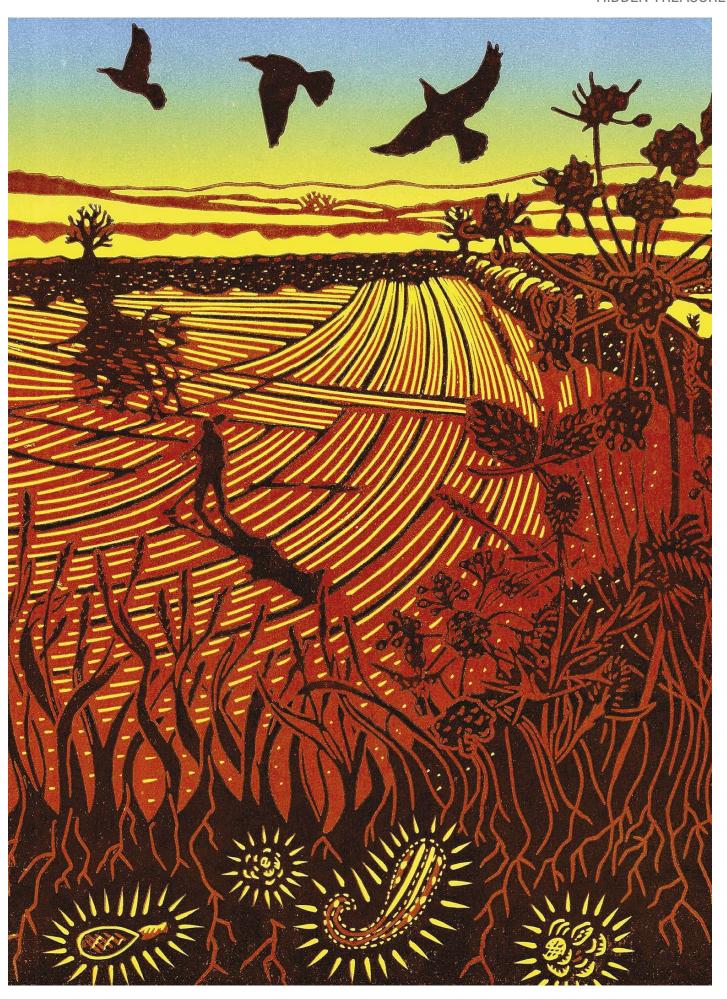
Detectorist Steve Critchley, a member of the UK's National Council for Metal Detecting, believes that this reality is often very different to what keen new detectorists expect. "People who have taken up and continued detecting tend to appreciate the value of just being outdoors. Others who take it up with different motivations are usually put off by a succession of finds of modern metallic junk."

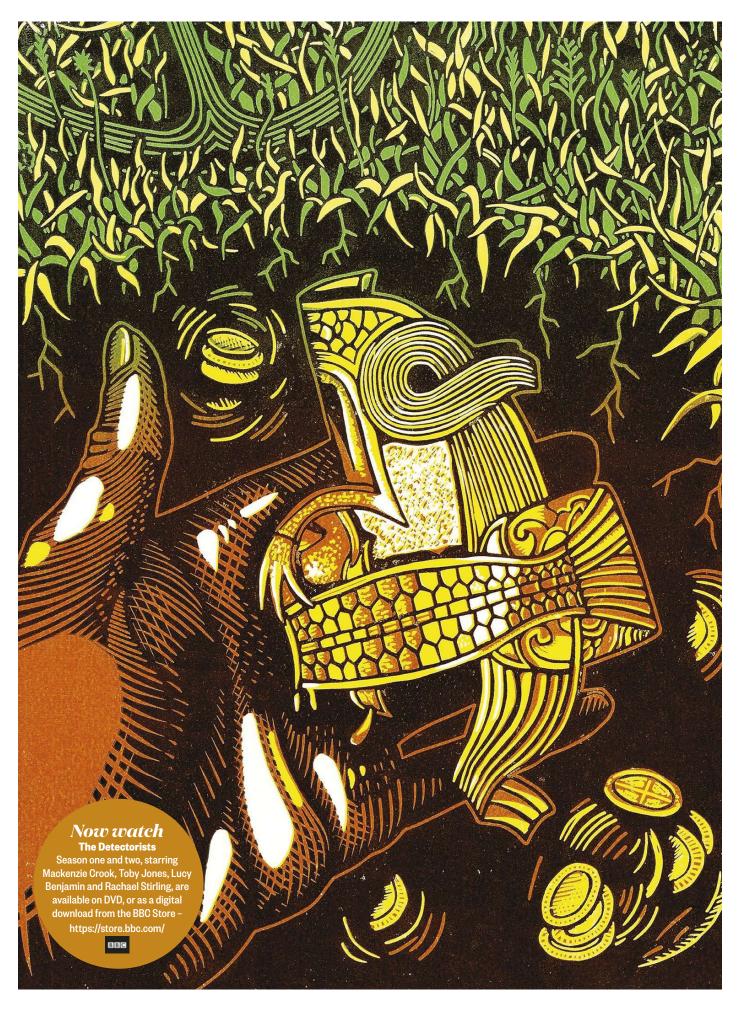
ANCIENT DISCOVERIES

"What first excited me about metal detecting was my first proper find," says Peter. "Finding your first coin with a date on it – it might be only be from the 1920s – is what gets you hooked, and then you just want to push the date back further and further. You want to go back in time."

"People think I've achieved something big but it's just a stroke of luck, really," says Paul. "If you put enough time in, you'll get lucky – you'll find something really interesting."

I ask Paul how much perseverance was required before he unearthed his silver stash. He laughs. "Forty years. I've been doing this for that long. Poto: Press Association. Illustration: Robin@kia-artist





Photos ® National Museums Scotland and University of Aberdeen Northern Picts project, Getty, The Trustees of the British Museum, APEX

Although my find is big news, there's an even bigger difference between the coins and what I usually find. Most of the stuff I dig up, I get to keep and look at every day. In this case, the story behind the coins is more interesting than the find itself."

He's not wrong. The 5,000 coins are an unusual mix of Anglo-Saxon and Viking currency, and bear the faces of their respective kings, Ethelred the Unready and Canute. Their discovery casts a new light on Britain on the eve of the Norman invasion. These are the kind of artefacts that can transform historians' understanding of an era almost overnight. Even the very small finds add to our shared history, and detectorists often record and aggregate what they discover into a national database such as the Portable Antiquities Scheme (PAS).

HOW TO GO HUNTING

The first step in any detectorist's process is to select a site, but even that, according to Steve Critchley, is cursed with the difficulty of obtaining permission in the first place. "Your choice of where to search is often governed by the need to gain access. The internet gives today's detectorist a wealth of sources for finding a site, from county archaeological records to aerial photographs, but even with the best information, access is not guaranteed and without that you cannot follow up your research."

Many of the UK's largest landowners are unwilling to let detectorists onto their land, and among smaller farms there's sometimes a fear of attracting thieves or 'nighthawks'. Incidents of archeological desecration of ancient monuments are rare, but media reports of illegal activity have made anyone turning up with a metal detector likely to be as welcome as the 7th Earl of Elgin at a marbles tournament.

Once you have gained permission, however, there is little formal paperwork to spoil your fun. Civil liability insurance is free to members of the National Council for Metal

Detecting, and in some places, permits are required to detect on beaches and foreshores. Then you're ready to get out and listen for the magical signals.

Viewers of the BBC's Detectorists series will already know that metal detecting is not so much a hobby as a way of life, but do detectorists recognise themselves on the screen?

"I would say that it's quite an accurate representation," says Paul, laughing in recognition at the well-drawn lead characters of Lance and Andy, keen amateur detectorists. In the first epsiode, Lance reckons that a Saxon hoard is "the Holy Grail of treasure hunting".

Andy corrects him. "I think you'll find that the Holy Grail is the Holy Grail of treasure hunting."

It's certainly a spirited quest. @



lan Vince is a writer, landscape historian, folklorist and storyteller who lives in the wilds of Wiltshire. www.ianvince.co.uk

ALL THAT GLIMMERS

Five of the biggest ancient finds in the UK

SEATON DOWN HOARD, DEVON

In 2014, Laurence Egerton chanced upon two ancient coins buried just under the surface of a field near Seaton. After further digging his find grew into a staggering 22,000 Roman coins, the fifth largest such hoard ever recovered in Britain. One of the coins became the millionth recorded entry in the Portable Antiquities Scheme. The director of the British Museum commented that "you sit waiting for the millionth object to arrive and 22,000 come along at once".





STAFFORDSHIRE HOARD

Discovered by detectorist Terry Herbert when he was searching an area of ploughed farmland near Hammerwich, this hoard is the largest collection of Anglo-Saxon gold and silver metalwork yet found. The 2009 collection includes decorations from swords and other weaponry, and has been valued at £3.28 million.



GAULCROSS, NEAR FORDYCE, ABERDEENSHIRE

Alistair McPherson was working alongside National Museums Scotland when he discovered a hoard of Roman and Pictish silver in a field - the most northerly find of its sort in Europe. Among more than 100 pieces of silver were coins, brooches and bracelets. Alistair McPherson's friends now simply call him "the Magnet".



THE RINGLEMERE CUP, KENT

Cliff Bradshaw discovered a beautiful Bronze Age golden chalice in a muddy field at Ringlemere, near Sandwich, in 2001. The badly-crushed cup, decorated in a cordware style, would have originally stood 14cm high with a rounded base. It is one of only two ever found in Britain.







VALE OF YORK HOARD, YORKSHIRE

David Whelan and his son Andrew were exploring a field near Harrogate when they discovered a finely engraved Viking bowl of silver. Their discovery inspired a full dig that ultimately found 617 silver coins and 65 other pieces of silver items.

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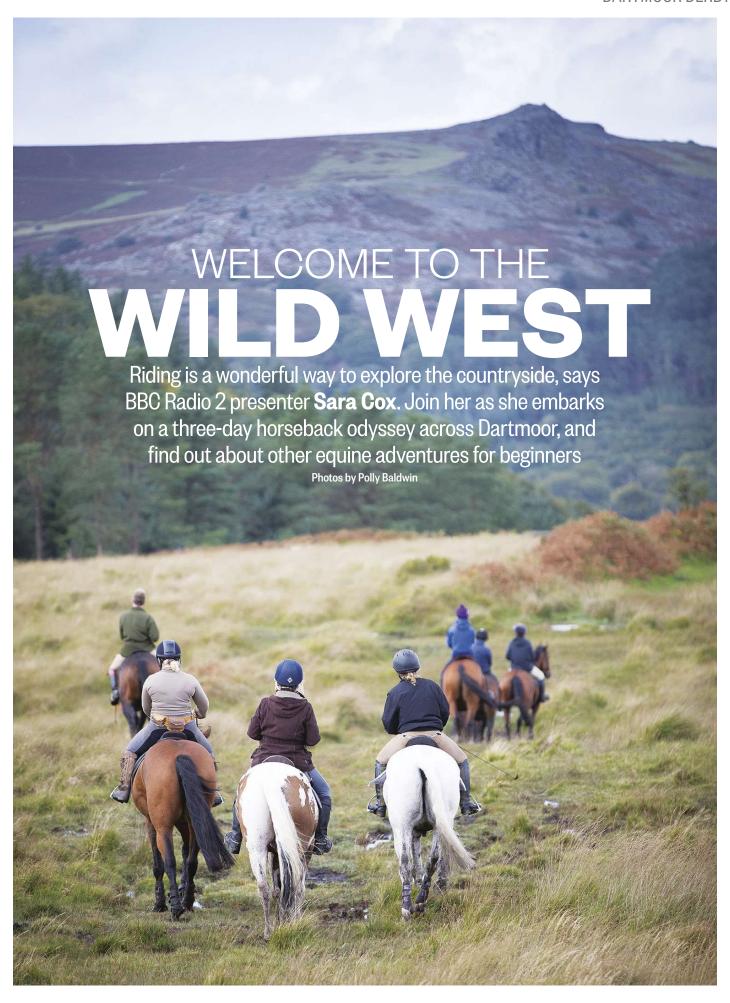
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even days after completing the first official Dartmoor Derby, I'm still feeling the effects. The ache in my legs from spending umpteen hours in the saddle has now eased, and my creaking back has fallen silent. But one symptom hasn't gone away - a feeling of elation at having spent such a wonderful weekend in the wild.

I appreciate that the idea of an endurance horse-ride is not everyone's cup of tea, but bear with me – you could be signing up for something similar by the end of it.

The Dartmoor Derby is the brainchild of Elaine and Bob Prior, who run Liberty Trails, a riding holiday business. Elaine has boundless energy: imagine a glamorous blonde Tigger in jodhpurs. She was born and bred in this gloriously wild part of Devon and is incredibly proud of the area and the farmers who live here. She wanted to combine her passions – horse riding and the countryside – to create an event that would be an unforgettable experience for the participants, while benefiting the Dartmoor community.

The world's toughest horse race was the inspiration. The Mongol Derby is a l,000km route through the mountains and plains of Mongolia, on semi-wild horses. Seeking a UK ride that was just as exciting – but less perilous – Elaine and journalist friend Lucy Higginson (former editor of *Horse and Hound* magazine) began to plan a route across the mooors. And so the Dartmoor Derby was born.

"Even the sweetest horse is still a tonne of animal with his own mind – but I'd argue that's half the fun"

SARA SADDLES UP

It is late September and I am standing in the reception area of the cosy Arundell Arms Hotel in Lifton, sipping the last of my coffee and meeting my fellow riders.

The 45 riders are split into groups of six or seven, each with their own guides to lead them around the moors. The plan is to ride for three days, covering around 50 miles in total. Each group can ride its own pace. The riders eat meals provided by a Tavistock restaurant and











sleep either in a hotel or a luxury Mongolian yurt at night.

Some riders have brought their own steeds and the rest, including me, have borrowed local horses who are accustomed to the ever-changing terrain of these moors. These hardy mounts can jump at full pelt over ditches one minute and skilfully pick their way through rocks the next. They are kind, but keen, so you must be a confident rider to partner up with them – after all, even the sweetest horse is still a tonne of animal with its own mind, but I'd argue that that's half the fun.

A RIDE FOR ALL SEASONS

My new best friend is Matt, a l6-hand dark bay thoroughbred. He's gorgeous, though fond of running off, which makes socialising with the other riders tricky. I'll be chatting at a relaxed walk when we round a corner and Matt decides he wants to get to the top of the hill first, cutting me off mid-sentence as we gallop away ("Ooh – look at that beautiful viiiiieeeeeww....").

Dartmoor locals say you can get all four

CLOCKISE FROM ABOVE

RIGHT Dream team Sara and Matt gallop across the moor; slowing to take in the view; the group assemble for lunch on White Tor; Sara found this simpler style of travelling hugely relaxing seasons in one day on the moor, and occasionally it feels as though I can see all four converging on us at once. Ahead, brooding winter clouds cloak the approaching South Hessary Tor in shadow. To my right is a suggestion of pale summer blue. To my left, watery autumn sunshine breaks through a cloud-peppered horizon. And behind me, a cool clear spring sky brings out the green hues of the bracken.

We encounter ramblers and mountain bikers, but perched up high in my saddle I find it easier to appreciate the wild expanses of space. Four legs are clearly better than two, and these horses cover the miles with ease.

Living and working in bustling London, I find the scale of Dartmoor makes me feel like a tiny dot on the landscape – and helps me forget the little nuggets of stress that usually litter my days. Here I just have to breathe the fresh air, take in the views and concentrate as Matt negotiates a steep drop or a patch of rocks.

Lunch is surreal – our group approaches the top of White Tor at a canter, with rumbling

bellies, and come across a scene that looks like a tornado has picked up a birthday tea party and plonked it down, tables and all, at the summit.

We munch scotch eggs, smoked salmon and potato salad – and when the wind picks up, I manage the most middle-class sentence I've ever uttered: "My couscous has blown away!"

After lunch, guides Tom and Lucinda lead us over the ancient pathway over Cocks Hill.

And so we reach our home for the night: spacious yurts, set up at Dunnabridge farm, next to a beautiful brook. The atmosphere in the tented dining room is jolly. The riders are folks from all walks of life, thrown together by their love of horses. Jane, a businesswoman from Sussex, chats to Wolfgang, the Austrian

GP; soldiers from the Household Cavalry laugh with Jason, a Tasmanian banker.

Sunday arrives and my back is slightly creaky, but this time I'm riding Barry, who looks after me. The weather is kind and we're bathed in sunshine as we gallop through Sheepstor and the rolling, heather-clad hills where Steven Spielberg's epic film *War Horse* was filmed.

Highland cattle, wild ponies and sheep pause from grazing to watch us pass.

In late afternoon, we dismount for carrot cake and hot tea, a veritable feast for our hungry troops. Then we ride on to the beautiful Bovey Castle hotel, our final destination. Before dinner I sink my weary bones into a deep, hot bath and realise I can't stop smiling at how wonderful the last couple of days have been.

©

TAKE THE CHALLENGE

The 2017 Derby takes place 22-26 September 2017. Costs start at £1,250 a head for riders bringing their own horses. See www.dartmoorderby.com or email enquiries@ liberty-trails.com



Sara Cox is a broadcaster and TV presenter. Listen to her

show *Sounds of the 80s* on BBC Radio 2, Saturdays, 10pm until midnight.

PONY TREKKING FOR BEGINNERS

Four locations in beautiful countryside around the UK where inexperienced riders can try riding for a day. By Sian Lewis

1. BURLEY VILLA, NEW FOREST

Giddy up, cowboy – Burley Villa offer western trail rides into the 'wild blue yonder' (the glades of the New Forest). 90 minute hacks fom £50. burleyvilla.co.uk

2. SHEANS HORSE FARM, NORTHERN IRELAND

Explore Northern Ireland's glorious north coast on horseback – you can follow in the footsteps of the riders of *Game of Thrones* with a trot through the Dark Hedges.

Treks from £12 for 40 minutes.

sheanshorsefarm.com

3. LONG MOUNTAIN CENTRE, SHROPSHIRE

Steeds range from ponies to huge Shire horses, all perfect at taking novice riders out into the rolling hills. Treks from £28 for an hour. longmountaincentre.co.uk

4. BUDLEIGH SALTERTON RIDING SCHOOL, DEVON

Budleigh's expert instructors help you gain confidence in the saddle, and their treks are leisurely affairs with picnics and cream tea stops. Prices are tailored to groups. devonriding.co.uk



Go online find more ideas for riding holidays at countryfile.com/article/horse-riding-dorset-western-style





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Get outdoors in the saddle on our pick of longer riding adventures.

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Spend a week in the saddle in Poldark country, galloping along the miles of sand at Gwithian beach and taking your horse for a paddle in Carn Marth Lake. Wheal Buller Riding School specialises in leading novice and nervous riders on beautiful treks. From £350 for a two day break. cornishridingholidays.co.uk

2. SCOTLAND

Fancy a challenge on horseback?
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famed coast-to-coast ride and cross
the wilds of Scotland on your own
horse or one of their own mounts.
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£1,290. Two-day rides from £250.
highlandsunbridled.co.uk

3. DARTMOOR

If you've never ridden a Clydesdale draught horse before, you might become a convert after traversing the mythical Dartmoor landscape like Sara on one of these gentle giants. Adventure Clydesdale offer three or five day holidays from £250 per day.

adventureclydesdale.com

4. BRECON BEACONS

The remote and rugged Welsh Black Mountains are definitely best explored at a leisurely pace on horseback, especially if you throw in the cosy B&Bs and hearty food on offer from Unicorn Trails. A seven-day riding holiday costs £1,659.

unicorntrails.com



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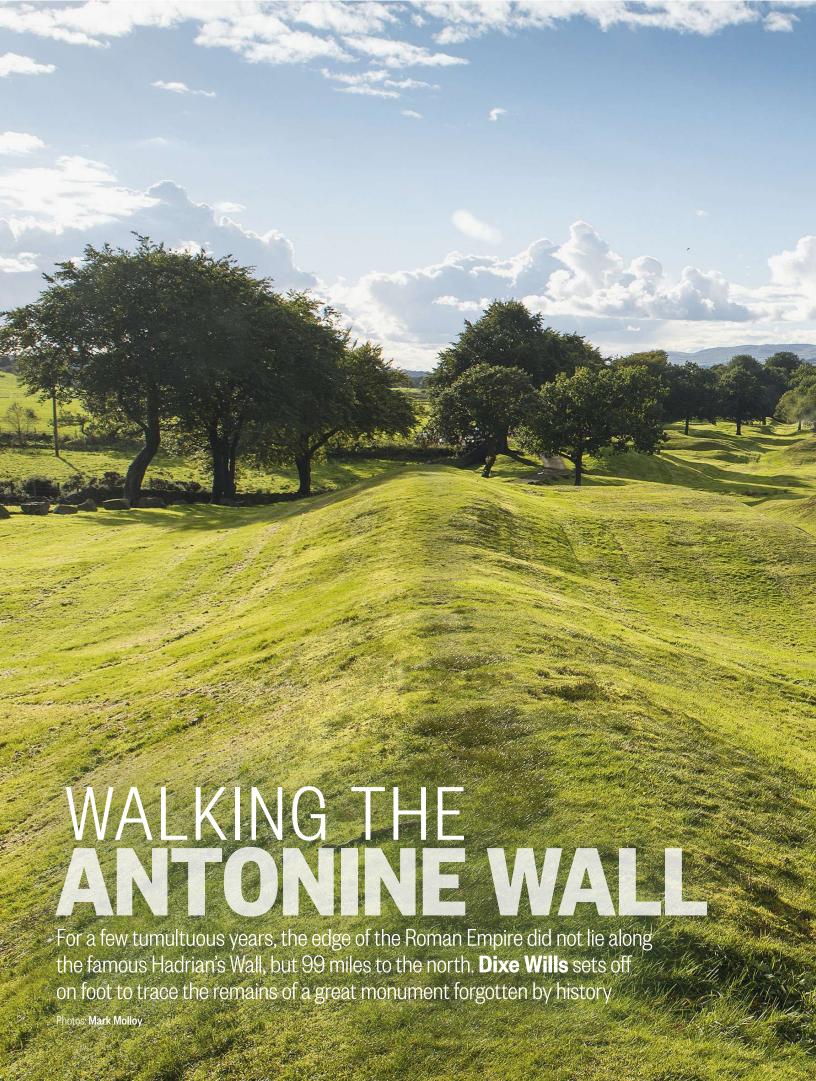
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t the top of a hill in the Central Belt of Scotland, I'm flying the sodden flysheet of a tent above my head as if it were some magnificently ill-designed flag. Curious though it may sound, I've never felt more like a Roman soldier in my life.

It helped that I was on the summit of Bar Hill, among the remains of one of the most attractively sited Roman forts along the Antonine Wall. It helped too that I was conducting a (terrifically unscientific) experiment into how quickly the wind that whipped through the fort might have dried the legionnaires' washing. That sort of thing happens when you walk along the Antonine Wall – you begin to think yourself into the sandals of the Romans.

ANTONINE AMBITION

Started in AD142 - just 20 years after the first stone was laid in Hadrian's Wall - the Antonine Wall was an attempt by Roman Emperor Antoninus Pius to push the outer limits of his immense empire still further north. It was a massive undertaking, stretching about 40 miles across the country from near Bridgeness on the Firth of Forth to Old Kilpatrick on the Firth of Clyde. Around 7,000 men laboured away at it, wielding iron saws, axes, adzes, spades and turf-cutters while living in makeshift encampments of leather tents. Together they constructed a 12ft-high rampart of layered turfs with a wooden fence on top and a 12ft-deep ditch to the north, facing the Pictish foe. The wall was protected by a fort every two miles, interspersed with fortlets, while the 20ft-

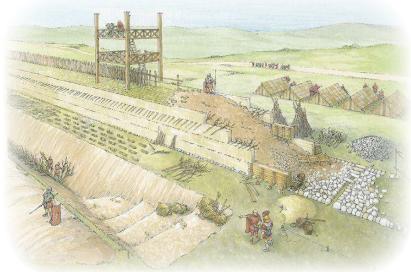


side became Scotland's first ever coast-tocoast road. None of this was ever seen by Antoninus though, because he never troubled to visit Britannia himself.

So it was that with a stout heart and a bundle of maps I took the train north from London to Kilpatrick. It has to be said that the western end of the Wall is somewhat understated: there's no more than a miniscule sign attached to a lamppost on the banks of the Forth and Clyde Canal. However, I did at least receive a welcome from a doggy-paddling water vole. I had walked just three miles, to the remains of a fort in Duntocher's Golden Hill Park, when I began to speculate which of us might be the wetter. I could only surmise that Jupiter, the Roman god of the sky, was still miffed at the destruction of his altar, which once stood there. Still, at least I was getting the full Roman legionnaire experience - their letters home are full of complaints about the Caledonian weather.

WRITING ON THE WALL

Since the Antonine Wall was not built of stone, and passes through well-populated areas at both ends, there's much less of it than can be boasted by Hadrian's Wall. However, tracking the parts where it has disappeared



ABOVE A section of the Antonine Wall at Rough Castle BELOW The wall was originally built with a 3.6m ditch, a 3.6m turf rampart topped with wooden posts and a 6m-wide military way made for a fun bit of detective work – either poring over maps for clues or keeping my eyes peeled for revelatory street names. Sightings of 'Antonine Road', 'Roman Road' and several variations on 'Grim's Dyke Road' (the medieval name for the Wall) all came to my aid at some point.

There were also plenty of highlights such as the ruins of the baths at Bearsden. These provided a little piece of Rome for the homesick soldiery. Walking around the

"I COULD ONLY SURMISE JUPITER WAS STILL MIFFED AT THE DESTRUCTION OF HIS ALTAR"

remains, I could envisage them sweltering in steam before scraping the Caledonian dirt from their persons with a strigil (a blunt cleaning knife).

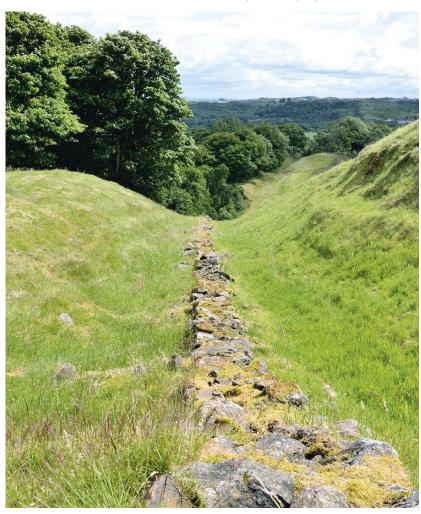
It was on my second day that I burst into the countryside proper. After breakfast at a café in Kirkintilloch and a gawp at the Auld Kirk Museum's Wall-related exhibits - including some scary-looking weapons and tools excavated at Bar Hill - I struck out along the Forth and Clyde Canal. The 18th-century waterway engineers followed approximately the same line taken by the Romans as far as Twechar (the pronunciation of which was vouchsafed to me by a kindly local but which, to my shame, I have since forgotten). The sevenmile section between the little village and Castlecary is justifiably considered to be the Wall's crowning glory, as well as being the only stretch that's waymarked with any consistency.

ANCIENT FORTITUDE

I began by scaling Bar Hill where I was to conduct my experiment with the wind (for the record, my tent – saturated from a damp wild camp the night before – was bone dry in 10 minutes). A descent and climb brought me to Croy Hill's summit fort and a splendid view of •



ABOVE A section of the wall at New Kilpatrick Cemetery reveals the cobble-filler used on the stone base BELOW The Antonine Wall's rampart and dyke pass over Bar Hill



THE ANTONINE WALL IN NUMBERS

37-40 miles

The length of the Antonine Wall depends on where one thinks it ended in the east.

12 years

Wall building took 12 years from AD 142. The Romans abandoned it in AD162.

AD 208

It was repaired by Emperor Septimius Severus (some call it the Severan Wall).

19 forts

Spaced out along its length were 19 forts and at least nine fortlets.



7,000

The wall would have been guarded by up to 7,000 soldiers.

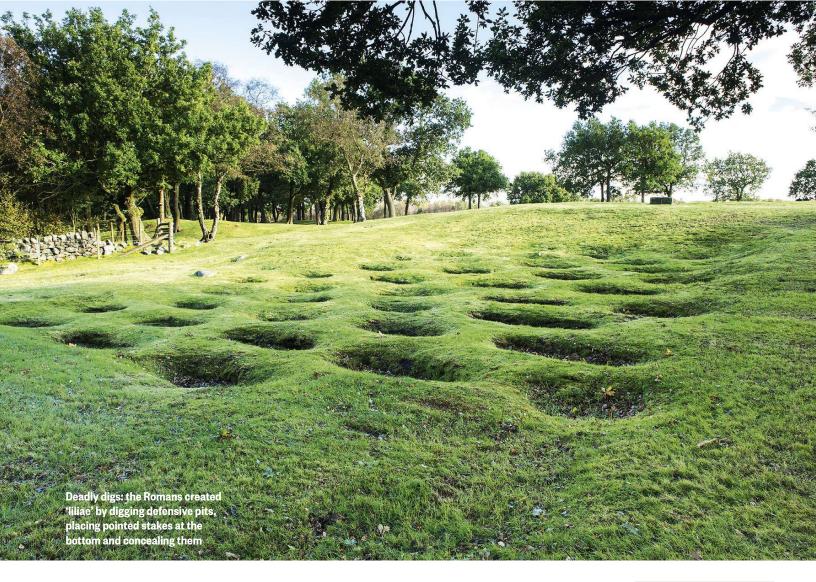




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the Kilsyth Hills. Down on the plain below, beside tiny Cumbernauld Airport, I marched along the Wall's most satisfying section – a mile or more of rampart and ditch that the Roman builders would surely still have recognised as their own creation.

The next morning, I roused myself early enough from my sleeping bag to share the sunrise in Rough Castle with the cries of rooks, the distant shades of disgruntled Roman soldiers past and a pair of roe deer grazing where the fort's granary had been. Illustrated information boards give an excellent idea of everyday life here and the challenge the stronghold presented to would-be attackers. This was evidenced most chillingly when I came across the fearsome polka-dot pits known as *liliae*, which the Romans filled with pointed stakes and covered to create an early and very deadly form of minefield.

Clipping the southern edge of Falkirk, I entered the delightful Callendar Park, whose grand house hosts a permanent Antonine Wall exhibition. Further east I came to Kinneil House, the grounds of which possess both the only visible remains of an Antonine Wall fortlet and a cracking little museum where

I learned how a local village called Kinneil, which has since disappeared, had used the foundations of the Wall as its main street.

BUILT TO LAST

And so at last – through yet more of Jupiter's cloudbursts – to Kinningars Park in Bridgeness, my journey's end. In three days, I had patrolled the length of the largest Roman relic in Scotland. I had discovered mile upon mile of open green space in the famously urban Central Belt. I had come to find a new respect for the Roman builders who had executed one of the great engineering feats of the ancient world. But I had emerged with an even greater regard for a less-heralded group: the Picts. For it was they who had dared to challenge this symbol of a most formidable empire and had emerged triumphant. ©



Dixe Wills is an author and outdoors expert. His books include *Tiny Stations*, *Tiny Islands*, *Tiny Campsites*, *The Armchair Naturalist* and *The Z-Z of Great Britain*. His latest book is *Tiny Churches*. **dixewills.com**

Turn the page to explore seven hotspots along the Antonine Wall



HOW TO GET THERE

It's fitting that the two ends of a wall built by a civilisation that did so much to ease travel in Europe are very easy to get to by public transport. If you are coming from the south or east, take a train to Glasgow Central (virgintrains.co.uk; 0333 1031031; singles from London from £30) then another from nearby Glasgow Queen Street to Kilpatrick (scotrail.co.uk; 0344 8110141: £3.70). At the end of the Antonine Wall, board the 45 bus from Bridgeness to Linlithgow. From here, it's a short hop to Edinburgh (ScotRail; £5.20), which has many southbound trains for those heading that way (virgintrainseastcoast. com; 03457 225 333; singles to London from £30).

SEVEN HIGHLIGHTS OF THE ANTONINE WALL

1. ROMAN BATH, BEARSDEN

Part of a fort that stood on this spot, the remains of the bathhouse reveal in intricate detail the inner workings of this important element of Roman life. The site is open year round and is free to view. 8 Roman Court, Bearsden, Glasgow G612HS



2. NEW KILPATRICK CEMETERY

Two sections of the stone base of the rampart display the techniques that the Romans used to build the wall, using cobble for in-fill and installing clever drainage systems. Free, always open. 35 Boclair Road, East Dunbartonshire G612BG



3. BAR HILL FORT

Commanding the summit, this is the most visually impressive fort left to us today. The foundations of the major buildings are on display and the view of the countryside below is magnificent. Free; always open.

historicenvironment.scot











4. ROUGH CASTLE

The best-preserved fort on the entire wall and the place to go to get a feel for how the wall worked and what it was like to live on it. The site is always open and free to enter.

historicenvironment.scot

5. CALLENDAR PARK

Great long stretches of the wall's ditch lead through the grounds, while a museum in the house has a room devoted to the Antonine Wall. The museum is open Wed-Mon, 10am-5pm. Entry is free. falkirkcommunitytrust.org

6. KINNEIL

The only visible remains of a fortlet lie in a field near Kinneil House.

A little museum on the estate contains artefacts found in the fortlet. The museum is open Mon-Sat, 12.30-4pm. Entry is free. kinneil.wordpress.com

7. BRIDGENESS SLAB

Kinningars Park in Bridgeness features a reproduction of the beautifully inscribed stone placed near here by Roman builders to celebrate the completion of the most easterly section of the wall. Open year round; entry is free.



Carpet-like mats of succulent foliage with masses of neon coloured daisy flowers. Bred in Japan, where garden space is limited so flower power is very important, these incredible plants produce flowers continuously from spring until the first frosts. Commonly known as the ice plant, they can withstand the toughest environments and still shine like a jewel. Beautiful when planted alongside paths or grown in crevices. Loved by butterflies. Unfussy on soil conditions in sun or part shade. Height 10-15cm (4-6"). Spread 25cm (10"). Fully hardy perennials. Supplied as well-rooted young plants in March – the perfect time for planting. Your collection comprises: **Garnet, Rose Quartz, Peridot, Moonstone** and **Topaz**. All plants are labelled individually.

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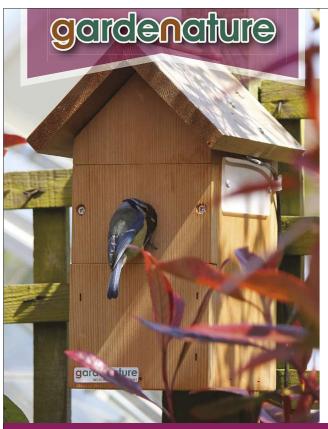
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↑ CLOUD COVER By: Chris Garner Where: Wasdale Head, Lake District

"I like this image because it captures both the magnificent landscape and the changing season – I took it last year as autumn was fast approaching."



≺ TEA FOR THREE By: Stephen Root

Where: Burnley, Lancashire

"These young kestrels joyfully greeted the return of their mother as she brought a tasty rodent dinner back to their nest in the walls of an abandoned building in Burnley's town centre."

www.countryfile.com 73



≺ TIME FOR ELEVENSES By: Nigel Hodson

Where: Magor Marsh, South Wales

"This bedraggled-looking water vole seemed to be taking great pleasure in eating his blackberry snack last autumn."

→ GATHER WHILE YE MAY

By: Julie Taylor

Where: Crantock Beach, Cornwall

"While walking my dogs, the weather lifted to reveal this lovely scene. I really like the contrast of crystal blues and golden fields."



≺ DYING LIGHT

By: Bleddyn Jones-Pearson Where: The Spinnies, Snowdonia

"I captured these jagged wooden posts silhouetted by a flaming sunset."

▼ THE THINKER

By: Joseph Maklai Where: Butser Hill Nature Reserve, South Downs

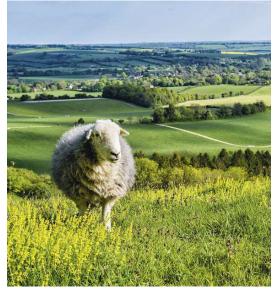
"When rambling, I came across this contemplative sheep enjoying the gentle sunshine and view. The clouds' playful shadows accentuated the rolling hills, and time seemed to slow."



By: Michael Quincy Where: Low Force, County Durham

"I took this after a morning's heavy rain, just as the sun started to shine and the skies cleared, revealing the force of Low Force."







THE PRIZE This month's winner receives an Aquapac 100% Waterproof Camera Case, ideal for protecting your compact camera while at the beach and even underwater. Waterproof and sand-proof, the TPU optically clear LENZFLEX™ lens window also allows you to take high quality photographs, no matter how wet the conditions. Comes with adjustable neckcord. www.aquapac.net

74 www.countryfile.com



FOOD



BURNS PET NUTRITION

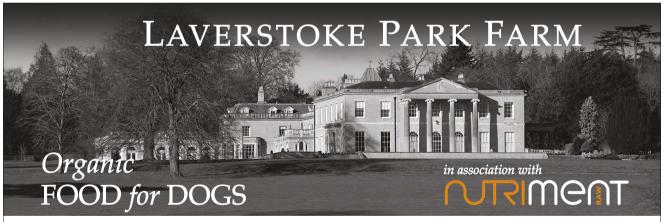
Helping dogs to reach and maintain a healthy weight

T's not just humans that overindulge and find themselves overweight. According to the 2016 PDSA Paw Report, 83% of veterinary professionals believe there will be more overweight pets than healthy weight pets in five years' time.

Burns Pet Nutrition specialise in natural dog food designed for pets to enjoy a happy and healthy life. All recipes are designed by Veterinary Surgeon, John Burns; an advocate of healthy eating, John believes that Burns Weight Control+ Chicken & Oats can help dogs to reach and maintain a healthy weight. Hypoallergenic and high in fibre, the recipe contains wholegrain oats and brown rice which keep dogs feeling fuller for longer:

Burns Weight Control is suitable for both adult and senior dogs and the hypoallergenic recipe makes it ideal for dogs that suffer from food intolerances such as itchy skin, digestive upset and waxy ears.

WEB burnspet.co.uk TEL 0800 018 1890



Laverstoke Park Farm is spread over 2,500 acres of rolling Hampshire countryside near Overton. It is certified biodynamic by Demeter and Organic by the Soil Association. By following nature as closely as possible this farming style holds the greatest nutritional value for our pets as well as ourselves.

Our NEW range of food for dogs is made with 100% raw British meat, offal and bone that is Certified Organic. It's packed with beneficial proteins, amino acids, fatty acids, Omega 3 and 6 and life-enhancing vitamins and minerals to provide the very best nutrition for our dogs.



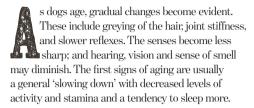
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FEEDING SENIOR DOGS

F001

Look for
a lower fat
diet when
your dog's
energy levels
start to
decrease



Digestive health and renal function

For many years it was believed that a low protein diet was beneficial for the older dog. However, a moderate level of good quality dietary protein does not cause renal failure; nor does it contribute to its progression providing it is easily digested and metabolised. Protein should be biologically appropriate (e.g. white meat, fish and egg), and of a high biological value easily utilised for structural and metabolic functions within the body.

Optimum weight maintenance

An older dog is likely to lead a more sedentary lifestyle, and therefore may require a lower calorie intake. Obesity is a risk factor for numerous clinical conditions in dogs; including diabetes mellitus, joint disease, cardiac and respiratory problems. Look for a lower fat diet, or reduce your dog's food intake, when energy levels start to decrease.

Joint care

Many commercial diets formulated for the senior dog will contain glucosamine and chondroitin in order to help to protect the joints and prevent the deterioration that naturally occurs with age from worsening. Glucosamine provides the building blocks to synthesise new joint cartilage, whilst chondroitin



helps to block destructive enzymes that break down cartilage. Some senior diets are also supplemented with MSM which has anti-inflammatory and analgesic properties. Diets fortified with natural antioxidants such as cranberry and yucca may also benefit older dogs.

Choosing a healthy food for your older dog

Arden Grange Senior with fresh chicken & rice has been specially formulated to provide the optimal balance of nutrients and energy for older dogs. It contains boosted levels of glucosamine, chondroitin and MSM for extra protection against age-related health problems; and like all of the Arden Grange recipes, includes additional natural ingredients such as prebiotics to support the digestion and immune system.

When to change to a senior diet

Dogs age at different rates so there is no exact age at which we suggest you make the change to a senior diet. Some dogs are still quite active at 10-12 years whilst others begin to slow down by 6-8 years. When you notice your dog is expending less energy and perhaps getting a little heavier is usually a good time to introduce senior food.

Ness Bird - Nutrition Adviser and RVN ©



nutrition without compromise

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EMAIL enquiries@ardengrange.com







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Ulrika Jonsson

with Dot and Dexter who love Natural Instinct

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FLEAS LOVE COSY HOMES TOO

leas aren't just a spring and summer problem.
Even in the cold months, when the heating in your home goes up, so does the risk of a flea infestation in your home. That's because toasty warm houses can provide the perfect environment for fleas to thrive. So what's the answer?

Year-round protection for your pet and home

By treating your pets regularly all year round with FRONTLINE Spot On® or FRONTLINE Plus®, you can help keep your home protected from flea infestations. Available from Animeddirect.co.uk, Frontline is an effective and easy-to-apply treatment, helping to safely protect cats and dogs from fleas and ticks – and the serious diseases they can transmit. Adult fleas are killed within 24 hours and adult ticks within 48 hours of contact with your pet. With its enhanced double-action protection, new FRONTLINE Plus stops flea eggs that fall off your pet from hatching, breaking the flea life cycle to further protect your home and prevent further flea infestations.



Our top 5 tips for treating a flea outbreak

- 7. Treat all cats and dogs in the household regularly not just the pet affected!
- ${\mathcal Z}.$ Wash all bedding, pet clothing, covers and towels at 60 degrees.
- 3. Vacuum your house daily, paying close attention to dark spaces under furniture.
- 4. Groom your pet regularly, to help remove any adult fleas. An ideal grooming tool would be FURminator; available from Animeddirect.co.uk
- 5. Treat your home by using FRONTLINE® HomeGard household spray, offering extra protection from fleas hatching in your home.

Animed Direct is here to help cut the cost of pet care for you

As one of the leading UK providers of pet medication, pet food and accessories, Animed Direct is often up to 50% cheaper than your normal vet prices. We work with all of the leading UK pet care brands to bring you the best possible pet care deals on the market.

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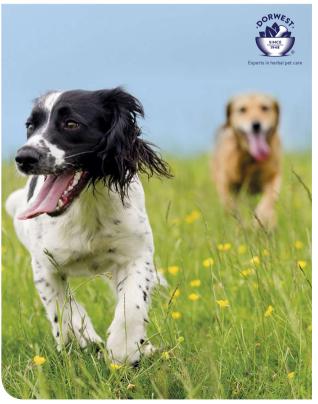
Customers trust us because we combine medicinal rigour – stringent pharmaceutical standards and active ingredients extracted from the whole plant – with the insights gained during three generations of dog ownership. We understand how herbal treatments work in balance with your dog to keep its tail wagging.

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PRODUCTS





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- 5 star award from recent product test from a leading dog magazine.
- Boxes can be used indoors which can be especially useful for training pups or if away on holiday, or if the dog is ill and needs to be confined.
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Customers can choose a solid or mesh top and optional dividers can be made to separate dogs. Escape hatches to the front of the vehicle are also available if required. A new addition to the range is the boot flap, which gives additional protection when the dog jumps into the vehicle and protects the floor and bumper from scratching and dirt. The main advantage other than keeping the car clean is it keeps the dogs safe in the vehicle.

Many satisfied customers have contacted the company following a traffic accident to comment that the dogs remained safely contained even when the vehicle was badly damaged. Also available are excellent quality Thermo Insulated purpose-built dog trailers.

WEB lintran.co.uk TEL 01673 885 959

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boxes are
available
for most
vehicles







KARMA ST MARTIN'S 66 Karma

ou're busily packing for a much-anticipated getaway; fizzing with excitement about new pastures and adventures (and respite from 6am alarms). Except there's a pair of big sad eyes right by your suitcase asking where you're going. Somehow it doesn't seem right to leave a beloved family member behind while you enjoy all the benefits of a well-earned rest.

In the past, taking your dog away with you on holiday often meant being cooped up together in a lacklustre caravan park or bare-boned B&B. This couldn't be further from the truth at Karma St. Martin's. That's because this hotel is one of the new pure breed of luxury hotels that goes the extra distance to make your four-legged friend feel every bit as welcome as you are. In fact, we'd go so far as to say they're the Leader of the Pack!

Karma St. Martin's has been voted among the 'Top 10 Dog Friendly Hotels in the UK' and Cornwall Tourism presented the hotel with a 'Best Dog Friendly Business Award' in 2016; fast-tracking the hotel to the 2017 South West and National Finals.

2017 South West and National Finals.

Here's how the team at Karma St. Martin's roll out the red carpet for their canine guests:

- 4-legged guests are immediately welcomed with a VIP (Very Important Pet) registration form, a welcome treat, bowls, and blankets.
- You can spoil them with tempting treats from the canine-friendly menu.
- The Pet-loving team can provide dog-sitting services whilst their human companions enjoy a nourishing therapy at the soulful Karma spa or befriend the local seal colony on a snorkelling trip.
- Walkies are an intrinsic part of any stay at Karma St. Martin's. Perfectly appointed on 2.8 hectares of sloping terrain, the beaches on St.Martin's are just a ball's throw way from the hotel and are open to digs all year round.
- Dogs get the exhilarating freedom of being offleash. St.Martin's absence of major roads and noisy cars means neither of you need worry about traffic disturbing your peace and safety.
- Enjoy an Access All Areas Pass. Pampered pooches accustomed to living in the lap of luxury can rest easy knowing that they may accompany their human into the hotel's sumptuous guestrooms, restaurant and wine bar.

So, why not join the growing legion of canny dog owners who are taking their best friend away on holiday and book your next 'pooch perfect' stay at Karma St. Martin's. With the majestic natural setting, brilliant creature comforts and pet perks, they'll have both of you feeling like Top Dog.

St Martin's is your dog's best friend



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WEB greenwoodgrange.co.uk TEL 01305 268 874

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t Norfolk Hideaways we know that dogs are part of the family, and the last thing you want to do is leave them at home (especially if it means facing those sad puppy eyes). That's why nearly 200 of our properties are completely dog-friendly. You'll also find that many of our cottages are located within easy reach of dog-friendly beaches, walks and pubs, so you'll be able to do all the things you were planning to do with the added bonus of your dog being able to come along for the ride!

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WEB mylor.com/holidays TEL 01326 372 121





MRANS PLACE

et in the beautiful East Sussex village of Alfriston, the privately owned Deans Place Country Hotel is ideally located for exploring the surrounding South Downs National Park. With a 2 AA Rosette restaurant, outdoor swimming pool and roaring log fireplaces, this 36 bedroom hotel is a wonderful place to get away from the daily stresses of life and relax, no matter the time of year.

There is no need to leave any members of the family at home on this holiday as, being a dog friendly hotel, you are able to bring your furry friends along on your walks too. They have even had the odd horse stay with them in their private paddock with water troughs and field shelter. With the glorious walks and views of the South Downs on the doorstep, and various country, sea and woodland walks close by, Deans Place Hotel is the ideal destination when visiting the area.

To book a stay at Deans Place, visit www.deansplacehotel.co.uk and enter "WeLoveDogs" to receive 10% off your accommodation.



WEB deansplacehotel.co.uk

Bring your furry friends along on your walks too,



THE PARK,

he Park in Mawgan Porth, North Cornwall, offers an impressive range of distinctive self-catering homes many of which are dog-friendly. The Park is set in an attractive valley garden just a five-minute stroll from the golden sands of Mawgan Porth beach and a few minutes drive from Watergate Bay and Padstow. The beach is dog-friendly all 12 months of the year and forms part of the South West Coast Path, a moderate walk with a few hills and plenty of opportunities to take in some breath-taking views.

Back at The Park guests and day-visitors alike can enjoy our indoor and outdoor pools, sauna and steam room, nature and play areas, plus free business class super-fast WiFi. Gusto, Newquay's number one restaurant, famed for its fresh salads, homemade cooking and Sunday lunches, has also recently arrived.

All in all, our picturesque park is the perfect location for all to stay with their doggie companions. There is a small charge of £40 per dog per stay, with a maximum of two dogs per property. We look forward to welcoming you and your four-legged friends.

WEB theparkcornwall.com TEL 01637 860 322



RURAL RETREATS

here's no need to leave anyone out of the fun here at Rural Retreats, because we have over 100 dog-friendly, self-catering cottages from the Scottish Highlands to the Cotswolds that welcome your K9 companions with open arms. Most of our cottages are located within stunning surroundings that make for exquisite places to explore by foot; you can leave the front door with your pet and head straight into a day of trekking the nearby scenery. There's sure to be a property that will be perfect for you and your four-legged friends!

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alking the countryside is even more fun if you can share the whole experience with the family dog. Our brochure, the Little Green Book, and website have more than 450 B&Bs around the UK and Ireland. They feature a list of dog friendly B&B homes welcoming well-behaved dogs. The B&Bs are specially selected and inspected, and provide high-quality accommodation. Enjoy a holiday and explore somewhere new by staying in a B&B with your dog. Email office@bbnationwide.co.uk for a brochure (+p&p).

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Every hour, another person in the UK goes blind. By getting involved with Dogs Unite, and raising just £35 in sponsorship, you and your canine companion could help people with sight loss to enjoy the same freedom and independence as everyone else.

TEL 0118 983 8315
WEB dogsunite.org.uk
EMAIL dogsunite@guidedogs.org

Join an organised event near you:

Most of our events are free to attend, and every dog who takes part will receive their very own hero dog cape. Come and join us for a fantastic walk; you'll be helping to support one of the 4,800 Guide Dogs partnerships in the UK.

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Unite dogs in your local area - it really is a walk in the park! We'll provide all the materials you need to make a good day great and be on hand to support you from start to finish. By organising an event for dogs and their owners in your local area, you and your participants can help change the life of someone who is blind or partially sighted.

Go solo, and support us at a time and place to suit you:

Love long walks in the Great British countryside? Then make your ordinary dog walk extraordinary! My Dogs Unite is the sponsored dog walk that you can do anytime, anywhere – but don't worry! We'll still send out a hero dog cape so that your dog looks the part along the way.

Did you know?

Almost two million people in the UK are living with sight loss. By 2050, there could be nearly four million. We rely on donations from individuals to continue our life-changing work. The guide dog service does not receive any government funding.

Think you've got what it takes to change a life? Get in touch with us on **0118 983 8315**, or visit us at **www.dogsunite.org.uk**.

three Dogs Unite events this year, and my dogs always wear their capes when we go out on a long walk. I love how proud they look when they're wearing them!









CHARITY





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re you ready for the unexpected? If you had to have a hospital stay or look after a sick relative, who would care for your pets? Our Tails of the Unexpected campaign is there to help you think about care arrangements for your animals if you are suddenly and unexpectedly called away from home. To download our free guide and care forms visit www.nawt.org.uk.

WEB nawt.org.uk TEL 0208 950 0177 (Option 1)





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WEB retiredgreyhounds.co.uk/friendship **TEL** 020 833 53 016





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he Retired Greyhound Trust (RGT) is a national charity founded in 1975. Roughly 8,000 racing greyhounds retire every year and we find homes for approximately half of them. As a charity, we strive towards a day when all racing greyhounds retire to loving homes and are treated with compassion and kindness. There are always 1,000 dogs in our care at any one time, waiting for their perfect home and for someone to give them the retirement they deserve. Could that person be you?

With their grace, good nature and intelligence, greyhounds have been a popular companion dog for thousands of years. Greyhounds are very people oriented, easy-going dogs who only need two brisk walks a day to stay fit.

Greyhounds are suitable for all kinds of families and our helpful team will be there to guide you through each step of the process and answer any questions you may have. Please consider adopting a greyhound as your next pet or making a donation to help us home more greyhounds, as there are still many more that need our help and love.

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Send or call for your Forever Loved information pack today

Mr/Mrs/Ms/other First name Surname
Address
Postcode

Telephone

Battersea Dogs & Cats Home would love to call you, to talk about the amazing difference you have made and how your financial support can help more dogs and cats. Please share your telephone number if you're happy for us to contact you in this way.

Battersea Dogs & Cats Home would like to contact you by post in future about how your financial support can help our dogs and cats. If you do not wish to be contacted please let us know by writing on this form or using the contact details below.

Supporter Services contact details: Freepost RTLJ-ETCZ-SCCZ, Battersea Dogs & Cats Home, 4 Battersea Park Road, London SW8 4AA **Email:** fundraising@battersea.org.uk

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IN SEARCH OF EPIC VIEWS

Get your hiking boots on – we're rambling across Britain to seek out the most spectacular vistas to lift your spirits



in copyright 2016 0S Photo: Alamv

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Your handy guide to this month's Great Days Out



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WALK: The Quiraing, Isle of Skye

SANCTUARY IN THE SKY

Unique and breathtakingly dramatic, **Fergal MacErlean**'s favourite Hebridean landscape is sure to fire your zest for the great outdoors

or me and for countless others, the Isle of Skye has an attraction that is distinct from anywhere else. It's hard to put a finger on what exactly makes the land off the north-west coast of Scotland so special. But for those in search of epic views, there's no question that this island's

astounding, albeit sometimes foreboding, mountain ranges are mecca.

The largest of the Inner
Hebrides has three geological
faces. Mountaineers are drawn
to its wildly serrated **Cuillin Hills**, the deeply eroded
remnants of large volcanoes.
Further south, the 2,800
million-year-old Lewisian

gneisses on the **Sleat Peninsula** are among the oldest rocks in Europe. And the north of the island, where we are headed, is composed mainly of lava flows. Glaciers played their part too, sculpting the mountains and the **Trotternish Escarpment** where the **Quiraing** lies.

If you are travelling from the



south of the island and have passed through **Broadford**, you'll get glimpses of some of the **Black Cuillin** summits from **Loch Ainort** before rounding below conical **Glamaig**. Then, on the road to **Staffin**, there are views of the island of **Raasay**. At a high point on the road, there's a sudden view of the Trotternish Escarpment and the unmistakeable **Old Man of Storr** poking at

LABYRINTH LANDSCAPE

the sky like an evil stake.

A mile-long path leads up to this bizarre feature from the

main road. The Old Man of Storr is kept company by other rock spires, collectively called the **Sanctuary**. These pinnacles and their brothers on

"THERE'S A SUDDEN VIEW OF THE OLD MAN OF STORR, POKING AT THE SKY LIKE AN EVIL STAKE"

the Quiraing were formed as the result of landslips that occurred on the 19-mile long escarpment. Gravity caused the immense weight of the upper volcanic layers of the **Trotternish ridge** to dislodge the weaker underlying sedimentary rock layers.
Once the post-glacial landslips

occurred, the rocks were subjected to erosion, leaving behind the most resistant parts. Now the entire

escarpment can be walked as part of a very long outing, but most walkers might find it easier to explore the broad ridge on a shorter ramble.

1 THE FOLDED HILLS

The signed road to the Quiraing begins after Staffin, at **Brogaig**. With hairpin bends and gradients of 15 degrees, it climbs west up towards the escarpment but is not always passable in winter conditions. After a cemetery, you'll reach the car park from where you can cross to the opposite side of the road to take the **Flodigarry** path.

An information board details how the Anglicised Gaelic name Quiraing is derived from the Old Norse Kvi Rand, which means something folded. It's an apt description for this, the largest mass movement slide in Britain; in total it extends for more than three square miles and is still active. Every year the coastal road below at Flodigarry has to be repaired due to destruction caused by the landslips.

As you walk north, the ground starts to drop more steeply on the right but the narrow, mainly level path is good. An advantage of going at this time of year - weather permitting - is that there's a good chance you will have the approach to the Quiraing more or less to yourself, unlike in the warmer months. Enjoy the initial views of the towers and spires that make up the 1.25-mile-wide rock feature. Be sure to look back, too, as vou can see all the way to the southern end of the Trotternish ridge.

2 ISLAND SPOTTING

Soon you will come to a burn crossing, one of two slightly awkward gully crossings. And as you walk on, there is a palpable sense that you are drawing closer to something mysterious. Away to your right there is a marvellous view down to and over the sea where you can pick out Rona, Raasay, and other islands that lie between •

orthe: Gothy



THE ROUTE

2 MILES I 2.5 HOURS

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THIS ROUTE

Skye and the peninsula of **Applecross** over on the Scottish mainland.

3 GO TO JAIL

After half a mile, the path steepens as it ascends between the outlying rock formation known as the Prison, to your right, and the entrance to the Quiraing on your left. If you've got plenty of time, you can amble around the stunning features of the Quiraing or just head directly for the delights of the aptly-named **Table**.

To get there requires tackling some steep but short rocky and earthy slopes, but it's worth it. First you need to reach the **Needle** – a towering, 20-foot-high shard of dark basalt that stands guard patiently by the Quiraing.

4 AMONG STONE SPIRES

Leave the main path at its crest, marked by a cairn, and climb the steep muddy slope to reach the Needle. You will find yourself in a land of surreal pinnacles and buttresses; there is definitely a hint of the supernatural about this lonely place. Keep to the left of the Needle to continue climbing. Soon a narrow path leads right, up to a gap via a gully.

Take your time and enjoy the surroundings. Between gaps in the rock there are fabulous views to the north and east. You will be able to spot tiny **Staffin Island** down below and the deep sea lochs of **Torridon** and **Gairloch** cutting into the mainland.

5 LAY ON THE TABLE

A path beyond the gully drops a little before zig-zagging up another steep rise towards a big flat buttress – the Table. The best and safest way to access its flat top is by passing below the Table to the left and then following an easy path up the back of this remarkable little plateau.

On a clear day, the views from here are magnificent, and are enhanced by the magical setting. Covered in short grass, the Table has slipped as a complete section from above and is so level, local folkslore has it that shinty (a Scottish game similar to hockey) matches were once played on its grassy surface. Now it's the perfect place to stop for lunch.

The descent to the Quiraing, which should be done slowly and surely, follows the exact same route as the one up, although anyone who can't be dragged away from the wild beauty of the Quiraing just yet can simply stay on the main level Flodigarry path for a further half mile to reach a large cairn and new views out to the churning sea.



Fergal MacErlean is an outdoors writer who loves exploring Scotland.

FOUR MORE AMAZING VIEWS IN SCOTLAND

COIRE LAGAN

Cuillin, Skye

It's hard to appreciate how spectacular this corrie is until you're right upon it. It reveals its emerald green secrets when you're high on the hill following the good mapmarked paths that make an easy introduction to the pleasures of the Cuillins.



SANDWOOD BAY

Wester Ross

A four-hour hike across the moors rewards those dedicated enough to search out this famously beautiful beach with a view of pink sand and crystal water.

A ruined cottage and a towering sea stack perched in the ocean watch over it all.



CREAG AN TUIRC

Balquhidder, Stirling

This little-known vantage point gives stunning views of the glen at Balquhidder. From the lane that winds up from the churchyard, turn right onto a forestry road to follow waymarkers to the precipitous crag, once a rallying place of Clan MacLaren.



ST NINIAN'S CAVE

Whithorn, Dumfries & Galloway

Scotland's first saint is said to have lived by this scenic beach. Walk through woods from a car park by Kidsdale and you'll suddenly appear at the coast, with views to the Isle of Man. St Ninian's cave-like shelter lies waiting to be explored to the right.





How to use the **ViewRanger app**



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If you would like to access a route using your smartphone or tablet, here's what to do:

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2. Open the app on your device and hold your phone above the printed QR code. It then does all the work!



3. The app will take you through to this walk in the ViewRanger app, so that you can carry the route around with you in your pocket.

And you're ready to go!





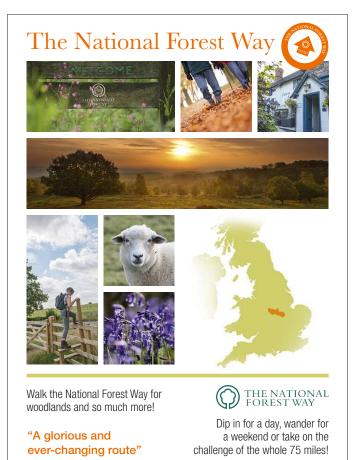
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WALK: Crackpot Hall, Swaledale, North Yorkshire

SECRETS OF THE DALE

Anthony Burton discovers a lush corner of the Yorkshire Dales where an intriguing ruin watches over a landscape of majestic falls and verdant valleys

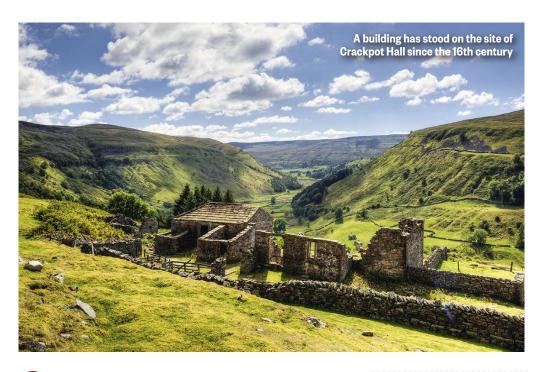
earning for wide open spaces?
This wonderful high-level walk meanders past a storied ruin and ends at an attractive waterfall in a little-visited, yet glorious, pocket of the Yorkshire Dales.

HOW GREEN IS THE VALLEY

The walk starts in the little village of Muker in the heart of **Swaledale**, a lush green valley with a patchwork of tiny fields and barns. This has never been one of the more popular tourist dales, but our walk takes in the area at its best and most dramatic. Take the little lane that heads north from the main road near the church. This eventually leads to a stony path zig-zagging up the hill with a view to the road snaking across Buttertubs Pass. Just before reaching the top of the hill, turn right to join the **Pennine Way**.

2 SILVER THREAD

This brings you to a narrow path along the edge of the valley. Down below, the river forms a silver thread through green fields, but here at the top the landscape is rocky and craggy. The path becomes rougher and the view opens out to the deep valley of Swinner Gill. The path becomes steeper and progress slows as you pick your way through the rocks. The view is temporarily lost behind a patch of woodland. but by way of consolation the going gets much easier.



3 FOOT OF THE FALLS

Keep to the main path then just before reaching the little village of **Keld**, where fields appear on the left, turn sharp right to cross the footbridge below its famous falls.

This is a popular spot for picnics, and provides rich pickings for the local chaffinches. Take the broad track across the top of the falls. This runs across the face of the hill through an area of old mine workings to reach the ruins of **Crackpot Hall**.

4 TO THE MANOR

The Hall is not, as the name might suggest, the remains of some grand mansion, but a remote old farmhouse.

The intriguing name actually comes from the Norse for 'crow' and *pot*, the local name for a cave. Stories are told of feral children once living here,

but a recent BBC radio story discovered that they were simply the farmhouse's family, roaming free in the 1930s. What a view they once enjoyed, of the rugged splendour of Swinner Gill and down to the valley leading back to Swaledale. Past the ruins, take the path downhill towards the river.

5 BRING YOUR BOOTS

The return to Keld meanders along the rim of the valley with quite a different perspective, looking up at the crags instead of down from them. Cross the river on the footbridge and turn right on the riverside path as far as the barn. Double back to take the path heading uphill to the corner of the field to join a lane back to Muker.

Conveniently, it arrives at the **Farmers Arms**, a traditional pub that proudly proclaims: "Muddy boots welcome".

THE ROUTE 5 MILES | 2 HOURS

West Crackpot
Hall a

Rayda

Kisdon
499

History

K



Anthony Burton is a freelance writer, author of a number of guides to long distance trails.

WALK: Dove Valley, Peak District

DANCE WITH THE DRAGON

Neil Coates hunts out a rare quiet corner of the Peak District where a turf-covered monster has lain sleeping for millions of years

quirk of geology has produced a strand of sharp limestone hills which erupt like a string of vertiginous miniature mountains from the havmeadows and soft pastures of the higher Dove Valley, near Buxton.

The Dragon's Back range are often cited as the only true peaks in the **Peak District**: a line of pinnacles said to resemble the 'plates' along the spine of a stegosaurus dinosaur. This exhilarating walk includes seven short, steep climbs to each summit. The walker's reward is ending up at Earl Sterndale's pub, the cosy Quiet Woman. a wonderful hark-back to the village pubs of yesteryear.

GREEN FOR GO

98

join the road for Hartington.



Head past the duckpond towards the conical hill of High Wheeldon. In a further 400m, fork left up the track marked 'Unsuitable for Motors'; at the higher lane bear right. In another 450m, just before a fork, look right for the path into pasture. Dip past the pylon and up the steep flank of High Wheeldon to the trig pillar. Above are the shapely limestone knolls soon to be climbed.

2 DOWN THE FARM

Head south (hard-left as you approach) to the nearby bounding wall and put this on your left. Plunge down the hillside and turn right along the lower fenceline above ash trees to a stile in the bottom corner of the pasture. Descend the road to the cottage and fork right. Walk this lane through **Underhill** farmyard, continuing on the part-walled way through several gates to the main road.

STEEP PEAKS

Look left for the phone box and turn right on the lane behind this. Cross the cattle grid; then head for the fin-like Parkhouse Hill to your right. Walk upfield to the walled corner, continuing up beside the wall. From the top corner, head up the ferociously steep ridge to reach the peak. Now head west towards the sturdy heights of Chrome Hill.

4 DRAGON'S DEN

The way off Parkhouse Hill is extremely steep. Start just left of the ridge-top before crossing to the right, dropping to a minor road. Turn right to the nearby cattle-grid. Immediately before it use the stile onto a path for Chrome Hill and High Edge. The path rises over hummocks of limestone to reach a handgate beneath a tree, then climbs to the summit ridge.

5 WINDING BACK

Advance along the declining ridge; beyond a low arch drift right, steeply down to find a wall-side way and bend left with it to use a corner handgate. Follow signs to another handgate; then turn uphill, shortly heading left along the top of pastures to reach a cattle-grid and farm road. Turn right to the minor road.

6 TIME FOR A PINT

Turn right, entering **Dowel** Dale's valley. Descend this until a point 50m before a pronounced right-bend. Look for the waymarked handgate, left, and climb right to a handgate through the skyline wall. Continue past a waymarked field-post to find a field road. The path heads downhill left of this. Cross it, then head left to a tarred lane. Turn right to Earl Sterndale and the welcome of the Quiet Woman.



Neil Coates is a Manchester-based writer specialising in walking and pubs.

From Earl Sterndale's green,

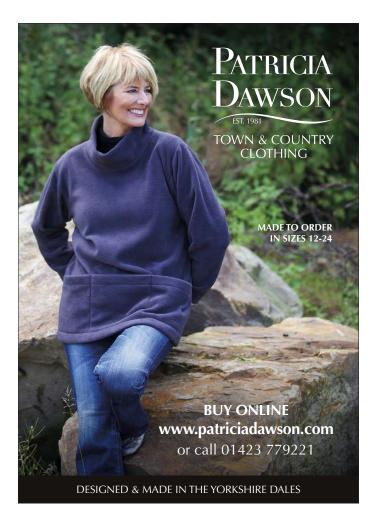
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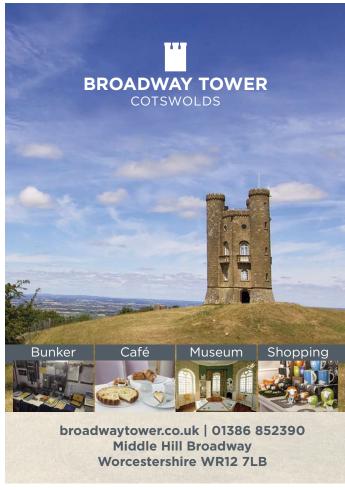
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WALK: Valley of Rocks, Devon

THE COAST THAT ROCKS

Exult in towering sea cliffs where feral goats clamber skilfully between Devonian crags. **Pat Kinsella** explores an ancient and mysterious landscape

n a quiet day, there's a lost world feel to North Devon's enigmatic Valley of Rocks, despite the serpentine ribbon of road that curls through the vale in the place where a river once ran.

Here, ancient fossil-rich fingers of Devonian stone form shadow puppets against the sky, framing one of south-west England's most dramatic views, as **Exmoor** stampedes off the edge of towering cliffs and down to the churning sea.

Many millennia ago, this rugged valley was left high and dry when its creator, the **River Lyn**, changed her mind and altered course to embrace the sea at **Lynmouth**. An evocative

and occasionally eerie place, the valley has inspired writers including Samuel Taylor Coleridge and William Wordsworth, and its rugged architecture echoes with ancient legends. The tall tales and high rocks will keep children enthralled, and it's home to a herd of horned beasts and their enchanting kids.

1 HOLLERDAY TIME

From the Exmoor National
Park car park at the eastern
entrance to the valley, walk
across the road and follow the
footpath directly ahead, which
ascends the western cheek of
Hollerday Hill. The path
elbows right and meets a
T-junction; turn left and stroll
along a sealed section of the



South West Coast Path with the serrated profile of the rocks on one side and the restless sea to your right.

2 HILLBILLIES

Soon you'll pass beneath **Rugged Jack**, a tumbling tor
towering over a spellbinding
vista of the Exmoor coast as it
runs along the **Bristol Channel**towards the **Celtic Sea**.

The story goes that druids were caught dancing on this vantage point by the Devil one Sunday, so he turned them to stone. Undeterred, a mischievous mob of characters still prances around here: the resident goats, who put local climbers to shame with their crag-clinging skills. These feral fellows enjoy the run of the rocks, as various herds have since the 11th century, when the Domesday Book noted the presence of goats here.

3 CASTLE ROCK

As the path rounds the head and descends, clamber up the rough trail on the right to explore iconic **Castle Rock**, an arresting summit of angled stone, which offers a regal view across **Wringcliff Bay**.

While descending, look back to see the profile of the **White Lady** formed by cracks in the stone. On the opposite side of the valley another rock formation, known as the **Devil's Cheese Ring**, was used by author RD Blackmore as the home of witch Mother Meldrum in his locally based novel *Lorna Doone*.

4 SECRET BEACH

At the roundabout, a return trail leads down to the shingle and sand beach of Wringcliff Bay, a beautiful secluded cove that you can often have all to yourself in quieter months.

5 WOODLAND WALKING

Back on the road, descend towards **Lee Abbey**. Take the track that branches left opposite this Gothic mansion and climb the hill. As you approach **Six Acre Wood**, take a sharp left to follow the bridleway along a gentle tree-fringed incline.

6 BACK THROUGH TIME

When you reach a switchback, leave the bridleway and go straight ahead along a trail that zig-zags through heather to join a path leading east above **South Cleave**, a protected part of the valley that boasts evidence of an Iron Age hillfort and prehistoric Celtic field systems. Stay on this trail as it wends right and then descends towards the car park where you started, passing a cemetery on the right. If you've worked up a hearty appetite, there are several options in the nearby clifftop town of Lynton to satisfy your hunger, including the cosy Crown Hotel on Market Street.



Pat Kinsella is a freelance writer and the author of *Devon: 40* Coast and Country Walks.

3 MORE EPIC COASTAL VIEWS



CAPE WRATH

There are few places in Britain that can induce a sense of isolation quite like Cape Wrath in north-west Scotland.

To the east, the inlet of the Kyle of Durness unhinges the headland from the mainland, while out to the west the Atlantic Ocean marks the horizon. On a clear day you may spot dolpins and whales.



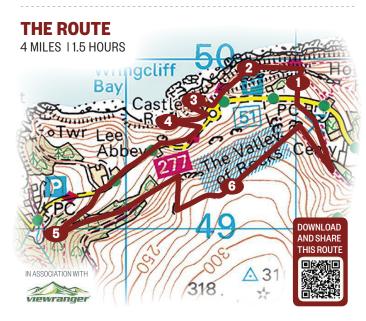
HARLECH CASTLE

Set within the western fringes of Snowdonia National Park, Harlech Castle offers a view that stretches out over rolling sand dunes, flaxen-coloured beaches and the dynamic waters of St George's Channel. Indeed, it was this very view that inspired Edward I to construct his imposing castle some 800 years ago.



NORTH BERWICK

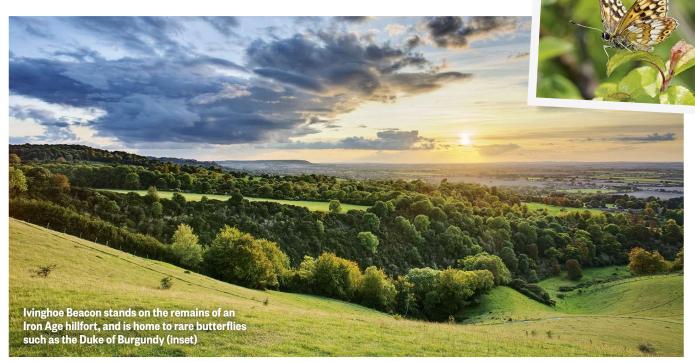
For a seaside town with a slightly unusual coastal view, head to North Berwick in Scotland's south-eastern corner. Set in the mouth of the Firth of Forth estuary is majestic Bass Rock. Often appearing as if capped with fresh snowfall, this volcanic rock is home a huge colony of Northern gannets.



WALK: Ivinghoe Beacon, Hertfordshire

A BIMBLE TO THE BEACON

Take a leisurely stroll along the ancient Ridgeway route to be rewarded with stunning panoramic views, says **Abigail Hamilton-Thompson**

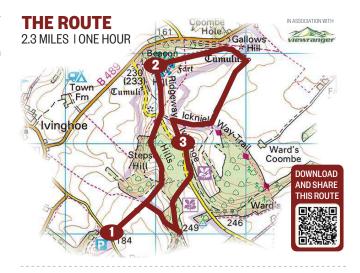


the rolling Chiltern Hills, Ivinghoe Beacon is one of the highest points in this breathtaking Area of Natural Beauty.

Walkers will be mesmerised by the spectacular views over the **Vale of Aylesbury** into Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire, criss-crossed by the dykes and drover's paths that reveal man's hand on this landscape.

FOLLOW THE ACORNS

The Ridgeway is an ancient path that was once used by travellers, herdsmen and soldiers. It starts here at Ivinghoe Beacon and runs for 87 miles west along the Chiltern's hill ridges to Overton Hill, near Avebury in Wiltshire. It's now a national trail, marked with acorn waymarker posts.



D BEWARE OF THE LION

From the car park, head onto the road and take the Ridgeway footpath opposite – it runs alongside a fence on the right before ascending **Steps Hill.** Continue to a road and follow the left-hand path uphill to reach **Ivinghoe Beacon.** You'll see **Pitstone**

windmill beneath you and, to the east, the carved chalk lion that prowls on the hillside near Whipsnade Zoo.

2 FLUTTER ON BY

Walk along the ridge and then descend into the valley, soon turning right up towards the road. While walking through the open grasslands and rolling chalk downlands, look out for rare butterflies such as the Duke of Burgundy.

3 WOODLAND WANDER

Take the footpath to the left, running alongside the road, pass through a car park and take a track on the right on the opposite side of the road at the far end of the next car park. Here you descend into the **Ashridge** woodland, home to fallow and muntjac deer. When the track begins to ascend, bear right on a path that returns you to the Ridgeway, or for a longer walk follow the track to the

Bridgewater monument and National Trust visitor centre.



Abigail Hamilton-Thompson lives in Herefordshire and loves walking and geocaching.

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WALK: Yr Eifl, Llyn Peninsula

BLUE WAVES ABOVE THE MIST

Climb high above the verdant valleys of the Llyn Peninsula and onto the crown of Yr Eifl, a mountain rich with history and alluring views across the Menai Strait, says **Julie Brominicks**

ountainous in spirit if not in height, Yr Eifl is a hill of vertiginous vistas and igneous granite intrusions. Its craggy summits have various names but are referred to here as Garn For, Garn Ganol, and Tre'r Ceiri, and this walk scales all three. The first two peaks are a bit of a

scramble – for an alternatve, lower route, a valley path skirts the valley to the north and east of the mountains.

ISLAND VIEWS

Bus passengers from **Pwllheli** can alight at **Llithfaen** and walk to the car park along a quiet road with silvery views to the

Tudwal Islands over the Llyn Peninsula's soft hills.

2 HEATHLAND

Wales Coast Path to Bwich. The scratchy heath brushes at your ankles, the pastelcoloured scrub scarred with streaks of matt-grey granite.

From the car park, take the

3 FOREST TO KING

Far, far below a glossy stand of pines, fringed by a charcoal-grey beach, sea-smashed and seal-haunted, is the old quarrymens' village, now a Welsh Language Centre

- Nant Gwrtheyrn, or
Vortigern's Stream. Little is known about Vortigern,



hoto: Alan

the British king blamed for facilitating the Saxon invasion, but according to legend he fled to North Wales and died here in this creek, overlooked by the towering black cliffs.

MOUNTAIN MIST

The brackeny hills behind flash red through the mist, and racing clouds chase purple shadows across a brilliant sea. From Bwlch, the magnificent **Snowdonia** mountains soar high in the east like a mighty ocean of blue waves above a valley of mist.

5 SCRAMBLING FORTH

On the left, accentuated by a telecoms tower, is Garn For. A slithery scramble gets you up close to the granite that paved the streets of Liverpool and Manchester and was hewn into Olympic curling stones. Below, miniature waves crimp the coast, and **Anglesey** lies offshore beyond the glimmering **Menai Strait**.

For those keen to avoid the scramble, drop down towards the village of Llanaelhaearn, before rejoining the upland route at Tre'r Ceiri.

6 BLUSTERY SUMMIT

From the track, take the marked path straight up Garn Ganol. A brisk wind whips the summit and bryophytes lurk in the many crevices underfoot. Extending west, the broad Llyn Peninsula and both its

"VAPOROUS TENDRILS CREEP AROUND THE DARK STONES OF THE DEFENSIVE WALLS"

coasts fizz in a golden light.
East, the Snowdonia mountains are clear and bold, blue-brown and framed by granite, a drystone wall drawn across them as if by biro. From here you can see the prehistoric hill fort of Tre'r Ceiri, which was still inhabited by Celtic Britons during the Roman occupation.

1 IRON AGE DEFENCE

Reach Tre'r Ceiri by descending Garn Ganol to follow the waymarked path across boggy ground. Cloud descends quickly here. Vaporous tendrils creep around the dark stones of the defensive walls. Within them are the circular remains of 150 huts, abandoned by the inhabitants of Tre'r Ceiri as the climate cooled and crops became increasingly harder to

grow. Vortigern, if he came here, would have found Tre'r Ceiri already abandoned and veiled in a thick, fugitive mist.

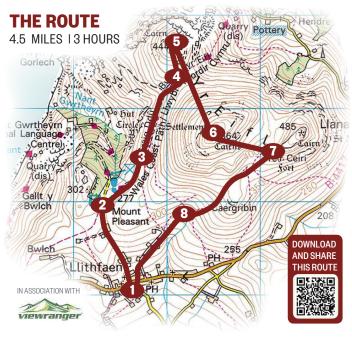
8 SCREE TO PASTURE

From Tre'r Ceiri, the path to Llithfaen shines like a silver ribbon between a pair of craggy mounds. Descending, the scree gives way to pasture and the cloud gradually lifts. At the road, turn right for the car park or continue to Llithfaen, the village glowing gold against its backdrop of rippled hills.



Julie Brominicks is a Snowdonia-based landscape writer and





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TOP SEVEN MONUMENTAL VIEWPOINTS

Roly Smith presents seven magnificent towers from around Britain, and tells the stories of how these eyries came to be built



The hexagonal, buttressed and turreted tower on Broadway Hill on the northern escarpment of the Cotswold Hills has been rather disparagingly described by some historians as an "architectural toy of the Gothic Revival". It was designed in 1798 by Capability Brown for the Earl of Coventry, who wanted to show off the extent of his estates to his new wife, and later became the retreat of Arts and Crafts founder William Morris. The incredible view from the top is claimed to extend over 12 counties.

2 HULL'S TOWER Leith Hill, Surrey

At 294m, the popular viewpoint of Leith Hill in Surrey was already the second highest point in south east England when Richard Hull of nearby Leith Hill Place built the 20m high Gothic tower that now graces its summit. It's claimed that you can see London, the English Channel and 13 counties from the top.

3 PENSHAW MONUMENT Co Durham

The great, blackened northern Parthenon of the Penshaw Monument, near Washington, lords it over the former coalfields of County Durham. It was built in 1844 in memory of John George Lambton, the 1st Earl of Durham and former Governor General of Canada, whose family seat was at Lambton Park, in the valley of the River Wear below. Lord Durham was known as 'Radical Jack' because he was an instigator of the 1830 Reform Bill, which abolished the system of rotten parliamentary boroughs.

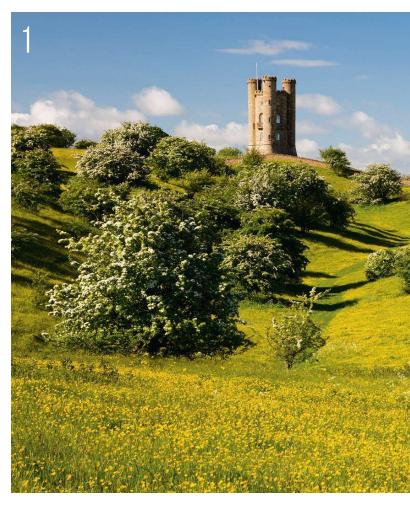
4 COOK MONUMENT North York Moors

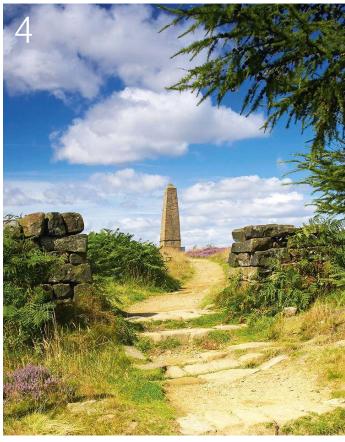
The great 18th-century explorer Captain James Cook (1728-79) was honoured by the erection of this blunt pyramid on Easby Moor, near his boyhood home of Great Ayton, in 1829. But there was a heated controversy over its building, because many local people believed that it should have been constructed on the more prominent landmark of the 'Cleveland Matterhorn' of Roseberry Topping, two miles to the south.

5 GLENFINNAN MONUMENT Glen Shiel

The kilted and bonneted statue that crowns the top of the 18m high Glenfinnan Monument at the head of Glen Shiel is often claimed to be of Bonnie Prince Charlie.

Certainly, this was where Prince Charles Edward set up his standard in 1745 in his





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Photos: Alamy, Getty, iStock

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doomed attempt to gain the British throne for the Stuarts. But the statue, erected in 1815 by Alexander MacDonald of Glenaladale, represents one of the ordinary Highlanders who followed the Prince and died in the appalling carnage of the Jacobite rising at the Battle of Culloden in 1746.

6 HARDY MONUMENT Dorset

The 22m-high industrial chimney-like monument on Blackdown Hill, near Abbotsbury, is often mistakenly associated with the Victorian novelist Thomas Hardy. But this Hardy was the "Kiss me Hardy" of Nelson's famous last words at Trafalgar, and commemorates Vice Admiral Thomas Masterman Hardy – a distant relative of the famous author. It was

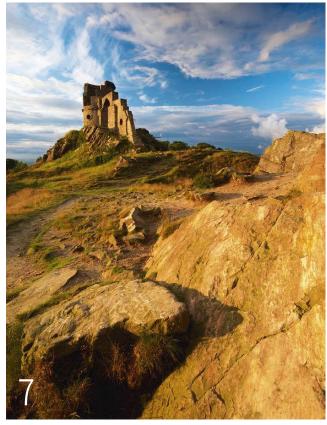
erected in 1844 by public subscription. If you muster up the energy to take the 120 steps to the top, you can see as far as the English Channel.

7 MOW COP CASTLE Cheshire

The sham Gothic castle ruin of Mow Cop overlooks the lush Cheshire Plain, westward to the first hills of Wales, and south towards the conifers of Cannock Chase and the Shropshire Hills. It was built in 1754 by local squire Randle Wilbraham as an 'eye-catcher' when seen from his home at Rode Hall on the plain below.



Roly Smith is an award-winning writer and editor, known as 'Mr Peak District'.











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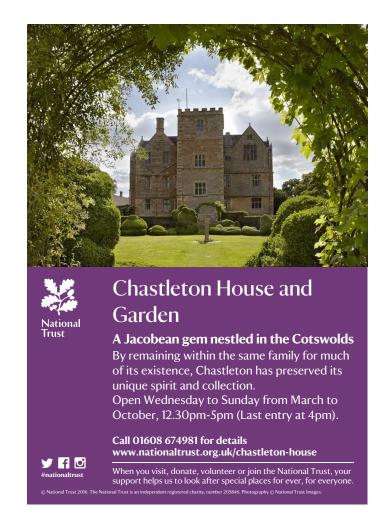
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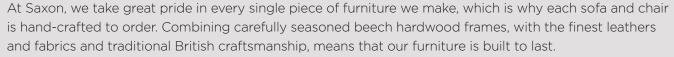
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Lazy days

BOOKS > TV > RADIO > MATT > LETTERS > KIT > PUZZLES

Reviews editor: Maria Hodson





RAISING THE FAMILY FLOCK

From sheep to rabbits to ever-more children, Amanda's amazing adventures continue

A YEAR IN THE LIFE OF THE YORKSHIRE SHEPHERDESS

BY AMANDA OWEN

SIDGWICK & JACKSON, £16.99, HB

There's a telling passage in this book by Yorkshire shepherdess Amanda Owen ("One husband, eight children, 1,000 sheep"). One December she asked her children what they wanted for Christmas. The answer was pet rabbits, which amazed Amanda as there were

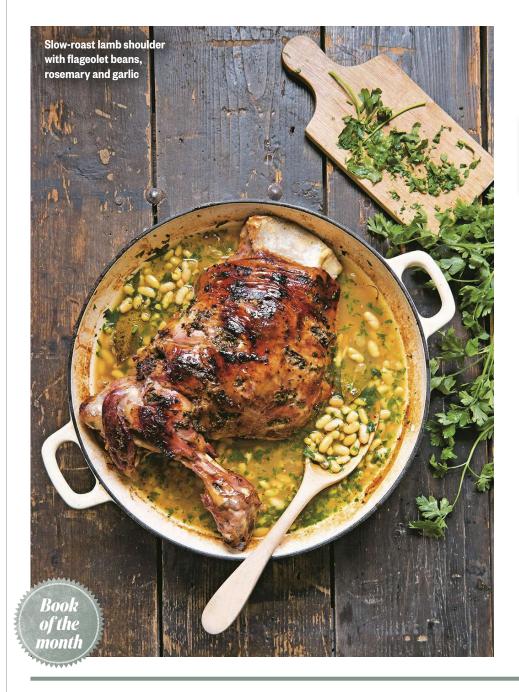
hundreds of rabbits running in the 2.000 acres of their hill farm at Ravenseat, high above Swaledale in the Yorkshire Dales.

So the barn loft became home to seven Dutch rabbits. One morning son Reuben rushed in to announce that there were now two baby rabbits in the hutch with Barry and Gary, the two 'boy rabbits'. Amanda recalls: "(Husband) Clive. who was leaning against the Rayburn warming his hands around

a mug of tea, smiled wryly as he looked at my swelling belly. 'Aye, they say they breed like 'umans..."

This is an honest, down-to-earth and often humorous account that includes Amanda giving birth unaided to Clemmy, the family's latest addition, in the farmhouse living room. As Amanda reflected, Clemmy's thinking seemed to be: "I were tupped at Ravenseat, an' I'll lamb at Ravenseat."

Roly Smith, author



BOOK NATIONAL TRUST FAMILY COOKBOOK

CLAIRE THOMSON, NATIONAL TRUST, £20



Claire Thomson wishes to do away with the notion of 'children's food' and create dishes that can be enjoyed by all ages in her new book.

As food ambassador to the National Trust, Thomson finds a satisfying balance between her experience as a professional chef and a busy mother, providing recipes that can be made with the whole family, but wouldn't look out of place in a dinner party.

Beautifully illustrated, the recipes are organised in rough order of preparation time, starting with quick dishes such as chard and leek frittata and moving on to more involved ones such as beef, prune and orange tagine. The recipes are mostly easy to prepare and don't require long lists of obscure ingredients. Though salads and lighter dishes are wellrepresented, the book specialises in hearty fare. The oregano chicken with tomatoes, peppers and orzo, and the smoked haddock, creamed spinach and chive sauce were both delicious and filling.

With childhood obesity on the rise, inspiring young people to take an interest in nutritious food is more important than ever. This cookbook represents a stride in the right direction.

Sam Swannack, reviewer

BOOK THE HORSEMAN

TIM PEARS,
BLOOMSBURY. £16.99



The first volume in a new trilogy, The Horseman is a beautiful portrait of rural life at the turn of the century. Set in Devon in 1911, farm life is seen through the

eyes of 12-year-old Leo Sercombe. Like his carter father before him, Leo shows a natural affinity with horses – "Another Sercombe with equine blood in his bones" – bringing him into contact with the

Master's daughter, "headstrong" Miss Lottie, who rides and shoots like a boy.

The two children develop an intimate bond, each innocently unaware of the taboos they're breaking until it's too late: "He was a carter's son and always would be, even after he became a horseman of whatever mettle himself."

Tim Pears combines meticulously researched historical material – each and every task, from that of the blacksmith, the farm workers at harvest time, the grooms looking after the Master's horses, even the annual shoot, all depicted in rich, evocative detail – with lush, languorous, melodic prose.

These slow but steady rhythms of daily working life are then punctuated by episodes of heightened activity or emotion – Lottie and Leo forced to watch helplessly as her beloved horse dies in agony of a twisted intestine; Leo fearlessly riding a gypsy's colt bareback at the local fair, "moulding his body to that of the galloping animal"; a stolen afternoon between the children; even the bloody butchery of a pig – the end result of which is a distinctly compelling pastoral bildungsroman that leaves the reader eager for the next installment.

Lucy Scholes, reviewer

COUNTRYFILE

BBC ONE, 6.30PM, SUNDAYS

19 February In Somerset, Matt Baker visits a farm with Guernsey cattle, and samples their yoghurt and beef. Ellie dangles above Cheddar Gorge as she joins the National Trust on the annual gorge clean, and also views the latest des-res accommodation – treehouses.

26 February On the Isle of Man, Matt takes a trip on the oldest horse-drawn tram in the world, which has run along the seafront promenade for 150 years. Ellie joins photographer Ray Kelly to explore the island's Tholtans, which are overgrown cottages once owned by Manx crofters.

5 March Helen Skelton admires the sparkling treasures of the night at the South Downs Dark Skies Festival.

12 March The documentary Away From It All examined farming life in Snowdonia in 1956, but how does it compare to farming in the area today? Adam Henson visits to find out.

19 March Meet a salt-marsh shepherd and discover other traditional rural employment on the Hoo Peninsula.

RADIO LIVING WORLD

BBC RADIO 4.5 MARCH. 06.35

Freshwater pearl mussels have one of the heaviest shells of any mollusc. They are also extremely long lived, but as mollusc biologist Mary Seddon from the University of Cardiff explains to Lionel Kelleway, their survival in British rivers is precarious due to the combined effects of river pollution, increased river sediment, and a decline in salmonid fish populations.

Despite its longevity, the freshwater pearl mussel faces an uncertain future. But the good news is that work by many freshwater biologists across the country is trying to restore rivers to 'ecological health' and thus

improve the fortunes of these once highly prized molluses.



BOOK

WHERE POPPIES BLOW: THE BRITISH SOLDIER, NATURE, THE GREAT WAR

JOHN LEWIS-STEMPEL
WEIDENFELD & NICHOLSON, £20



Nature writer and military historian John Lewis-Stempel has created a eulogy to the flora and fauna that helped men soldier on

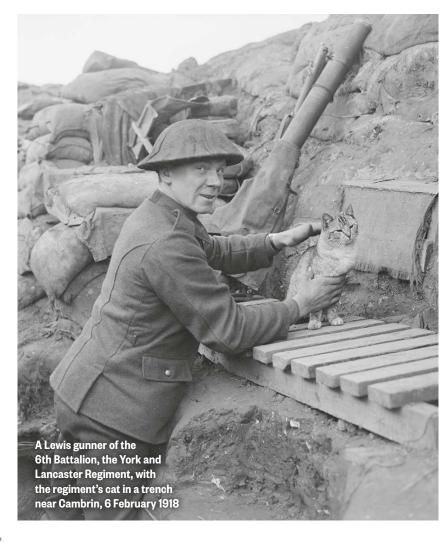
during the First World War. "The ability of nature to endure... gave men a psychological, spiritual, religious uplift," he writes.

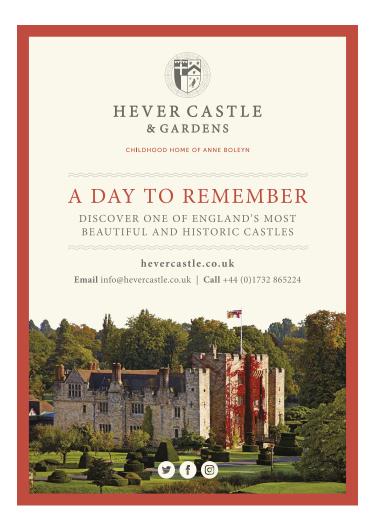
Letters home were full of longing for the British landscape, yet soldiers found solace in the "intrinsically beautiful" French countryside. And those suffering the displacement of industrialisation found themselves closer to nature than they'd been for centuries. Birdwatching became the most popular hobby among officers, with one writing: "Without the birds I dare not think how I should have got through the war."

There were other ornithological benefits: the development of warplanes saw pilots quizzed about the height at which birds flew – nobody knew. Carrier pigeons delivered messages across enemy lines (woe betide the hungry soldier who shot one down), while caged canaries comforted the wounded: "As every Edwardian knew, birdsong was a guaranteed cheerer upper."

The author pays tribute to the many animals that served. Millions of horses were shipped to the front; a selection of poetry reveals how attached soldiers were to them. Stray cats sent to war as pest control and gas detectors often became pets. Where Poppies Blow is full of fascinating (sometimes heartwrenching) information about the role of nature and animals in this brutal war.

Rachel Stiles, reviewer









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Matt Baker

THE COUNTRYFILE PRESENTER GOES BEHIND THE SCENES ON HIS SHOWS AND FAMILY FARM

ONE MATT AND HIS (WELL-TRAINED) DOGS

"Dogs always seem

happiest with

a sense of place

and purpose within

our family pack"

I've just returned from a long dog walk, so it feels like the right time to sit down with two relaxed hounds curled up at my feet and enthuse about my life with them.

I can't remember a time without dogs, and that feeling of unconditional companionship has always been with me.

TAIL-WAGGING TALES

The mix of breeds I grew up with home was pretty diverse. We had the guard dogs, St Bernards and giant schnauzers, with their big bellowing barks, numerous helpful and intense border collies, Labradors, with their

obvious on-and-off switches, and the inquisitive Cairn terriers that my mum now breeds on the farm. All of them were at their happiest when they had work to do and a real sense of place and purpose within our family pack.



TOP TIPS FOR HAPPY HOUNDS

Life with dogs can be complicated, so I've come up with a few things that makes my time easier with four-legged friends.

• I always accompany their going to the loo with a voice command. The aim isn't to control 'when' the dog goes to the loo but to make them understand that it's safe to do so when they're

away from home. Nine times out of ten they'll respond almost immediately.

• For dogs that love to rip up their beds, the best solution I've come up with is to nail carpet with underlay to the underside of ply board.

This creates a comfy bed with no edges, so dogs don't rip or ruck them up.

• When travelling, I use large flexible canvas dog crates. These give dogs their own safe space and ensure the dogs don't jump out when I open the boot on a busy road. Plus, they are an easy bed to fold up and take into a hotel, so both the dogs and I get a much better night's sleep.

• I always have an array of leads with me, ranging from extendable lunge line to slip leads and very light ones. And I clip a carabiner to my belt for hands-free walks.

• When I'm out with my sheepdogs I'll always carry a crook – I find they focus more on me, as they always think we're off to work.

• And when giving the pack food and water, I always put dog bowls in a stand. This raises the bowls off the floor, stops dogs trying to put their paws in them and keeps bowls in one place, so energetic eaters can't chase their food around on the kitchen floor.

I hope a few of these easy tips have helped both you and your owner.

one

Watch Matt on *Countryfile* on Sunday nights at 6.30pm on BBC One.

BELOW Matt

has had dogs

in the family

since he can

remember, and

the latest pack

includes Bob the border collie



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*We reserve the right to edit correspondence.

OWL BOX HEAVEN

It was a cold, dull, wet November day in 2015 and I had spent at least an hour on my local patch seeing nothing more than a few wood pigeons. I had all but given up when, to my delight, a barn owl flew out of a tree a few feet away from me. I have been watching wildlife in the area for over 30 years and never seen a barn owl in the area. The owl flew over the fields and out of sight.

Inspired by this, and determined that the bird should remain on my patch, I set about building an owl nest box. After some research, my next task was to find a suitable location for the box. I eventually found the ideal tree: thick trunk, high canopy surrounded by rough grassy fields and only a short distance from where I had seen the barn owl.

A month or so passed and I revisited the box. Below the base of the tree, directly under the box, I saw the classic chalky white droppings and dark black pellets. I immediately felt great pride – the owl had at least visited my box, even if not using it.

One dry evening, my wife, my father and I hid among the trees with a good view of the nest box. After about 30 minutes of lying still on the cold ground, we were rewarded as a barn owl emerged from the box entrance. I froze to the spot but inside I was jumping for joy. I couldn't believe my luck. I glanced at my wife who had a big grin on her face – my father didn't move as he was transfixed. We remained for a good hour before slipping away unnoticed. I'm pleased to say that to date the owl is still



using the box and I'm hopeful that it will find a mate.

A few days later we visited a second box that I had made – and I could not believe my eyes when I saw another owl fly out of the box. I'm not sure if I'm just lucky but it just goes to show, give nature a home and it will come. I hope that this short story will inspire others.

Richard Collins, West Midlands

Editor Fergus Collins replies: Congratulations Richard – an inspiring example of how providing the right sort of nesting and roosting habitat can really help birds like the barn owl that have suffered serious declines nationally.



THF PRI7F

March's letter of the month wins a super-bright, rechargeable head torch worth £49.95. The Radiant 250 Rechargeable Headlamp from Nite Ize has a brilliant, 250-lumen beam and five lighting modes, including a red bulb for night walks. Charge the lithium polymer battery via USB in around two hours. For more information call 01539 721032 or go to www.whitbyandco.co.uk

CAN WE AFFORD TODAY'S LIVING STANDARDS?

I was interested to read about the proposed expansion of our airports, together with consequential damage to our environment (December issue). Over the past 200 years, the prosperity of human life has increased progressively – starting with coal to provide steam and electrical energy.

Liquid fossil fuels were also discovered and demands continue to increase for the supply of energy for all forms of transport. It is a certain fact that supplies will not last forever and more research is required to produce alternative sources of energy from the sun and wind. The sea appears to be full of energy and efforts to produce fuel from farm crops and organic waste continue but can only supply a

A Vitage



Horseriding on roads

66 Countryfile (Sunday 27 November) talked about horses on the roads, so why aren't drivers taught to slow right down when approaching horseriders? It's common sense – but watching the programme, many car drivers were actually speeding past. It should be part of the Highway Code to slow down when approaching horse riders. It could cause serious injury, not only to the horse but also the rider, if the horse is spooked by a fast car. 99

Patricia Cook, via email

fraction of current demand. Nuclear power remains a controversial alternative.

Can we all continue to maintain present standards of life?

Philip Parker, Bassingfield, Nottingham

RUNWAY CONCERNS

In the debate over the third runway at Heathrow (December issue), there is no contest. The pollution (and associated health costs to the NHS), loss of homes and destruction of over 500 hectares far outweighs the jobs and other economic benefits.

The world has gone mad (a long time ago). Everything is money, money, money. Very depressing. **Debbie Green.**

via email

I am opposed to the Heathrow expansion but do think an alternative is required and do believe that, with a bit of joined-up thinking, there is an obvious solution to the problem.

Consideration should be given to the US air base at Mildenhall – the US are pulling out and I think, with high-speed rail link, it would would work as an airport. The runways are already there and the HS2 funds could be used to create suitable speedy connections.

Frank Garnham, via email

WUTHERING BRONTËS

In your review of the BBC drama *To Walk Invisible: The Brontë Sisters* (January issue) you stated that the Brontë sisters and brother were brought up on the North York Moors, which happen to be in east Yorkshire towards the east coast.

They were in fact born in Thornton, where I was born and went to school. They later moved to Haworth and walked on the surrounding moors all of which are within the borders of the Bradford Metropolitan District in West Yorkshire, many miles away from the North York moors.

The village of Wilsden, where I now live, is only a short distance from Haworth and Charlotte walked from Haworth to Wilsden to visit a friend living here. In fact, the hill and the path I can see from my front window has a preservation order because of this. Fortunately for us, this prevented the land from being built upon!

Julia Smith Wilsden, Bradford

Thanks to Julia and other readers who pointed out our error. Many apologies for this.



CURSE OF LITTER

I take a plastic carrier bag with me when I walk my dog in Ashridge and always fill it up with drink cans, plastic bottles and coffee cups from high-street chains.

Countryfile encourages people to get out in the countryside. This means out-of-control deer-chasing dogs, screaming children and plastic bags of dog excrement everywhere.

The National Trust here has a "stick and flick policy". It is a pity Countryfile does not highlight these problems so that people who appreciate the countryside can enjoy it. This also applies to many nature reserves.

Jan Bateman, Berkhamsted

Editor Fergus Collins replies:

Litter and plastic bags of dog waste are a blight and we regularly tackle these issues in the magazine, especially on these pages. You can find archived articles on the subject by searching on our website: countryfile.com









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Words Joe Pontin Photography Oliver Edwards

1. Welland waxed hat Schoffel, £59.95 Keep sunshine and rain out of your eyes and collar with this water-resistant hat on soft waxed cotton. 01572 772480, schoffel.co.uk

2. Shock Absorber Dog Lead Mountain Paws. £9.99

This elasticated lead gives your dog that wee bit more freedom. 135cm to 255cm long. **0118 981 1433, mountainpaws.co.uk**

3. Dicky bag Mountain Paws, £9.99 When your dog has done its business, bag up and stash out of sight in this sealed container, which can be worn on belt or dog lead.

01637 874 849, dickybag.com

4. Chestnut hiking staff with Labrador retriever motifClassic Canes. £18.95

Fend off footpads with this substantial staff, complete with leather wrist strap and metal spike base for soft ground, with a rubber cover for road walks. 01460 75686, classiccanes. co.uk

5. Crandall Tall Boots Bogs, £90 With these comfortable wellies your feet will stay dry and warm even on freezing days. Grippy cushioned soles provide a soft and stable ride, while flexible, fleece-lined uppers keep you cosy.

bogsfootwear.co.uk

6. Adventure Dog Series Heeler Medical kit Adventure Medical Kits, £12.99 If your pooch gets into a scrape, this pocket-sized kit comprises 10 first aid essentials to patch it up with, including bandages, antiseptic wipes, tick tweezers and pet first aid manual. For stockists, call 0116 234 4646.

7. Rustic dog whistle from £18 Made in traditional style from Scottish stag antlers. **01934 415 277, houndworthy.com**

8a. Weekender Dog Collar Houndworthy, from £32

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9. Dog coat Equafleece, £15-£46 If your dog suffers from cold in freezing weather, these cosy

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10. Tula Coat Páramo, £245

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After dark

Heading home in the dark? Be safe and be seen



REFLECT360 Waterproof Dog Jacket, Proviz, £24.99

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Glowstreak LED ball, Nite Ize. £13.95

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Intensity head torch, LifeSystems. £26.99

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Nite Dawg LED Gollar, Nite Ize. £16.95

Bright red LEDs illuminate this collar, with an additional reflective strip for extra night-time visibility. 01539 721032, niteize.co.uk

Country puzzles

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COUNTRYSIDE QUIZ

answers at bottom of opposite page

10. Poet AE Houseman.

□a) Latin□b) Theology□c) Geography□d) History

famous for A Shropshire Lad, was born on 28 March. He was a professor at University College London - what was his subject?



11. Hedgehogs usually 1. On average, for how long 4. What is the term for 2011. What was the average hibernate from November to does a ewe's gestation a group of frogs? daytime temperature? March. What is the name for period last? \square a) An infantry □a)8.3°c the state their body enters □a)2 weeks ☐b) A swarm □b)9.1°c during this time? ☐b) 2 months □c)10.2°c □ a) Torpor c) A clump □c) 5 months ☐d) An army □d)18°c □b) Laziness □d) 9 months ☐c) Narcosis 5. St Patrick died on 8. The word 'lent' is thought ☐d) Catabolic 2. The feast of St David takes 17 March. With which colour to be a contraction of the place on 1 March. In which is he associated? Old English word 'lencten'. 12. Which university annually Welsh county was Saint □a) Green What does 'lencten' mean? held the walk known as the David born? ☐b) Yellow 'March March march' in the a) Spring vears 1979 to 2012? a) Ceredigion □c) Red □b) Egg □d) Blue ☐ b) Pembrokeshire □c) Lean ☐a) Oxford ☐ c) Denbighshire ☐d) Loss □b) Bristol 6. What are the odds of □d) Davidshire □c) Cambridge finding a four-leaf clover? 9. The daffodil ☐d) Exeter (Narcissus) is named 3. Long-tailed tits are most □ a) 1 in 100 usually noticed in excitable □b)1in1,000 after a Greek myth 13. Approximately flocks. On average, how □c)1in10.000 that told of downfall how many dogs will many birds do these ☐d)1in100,000 resulting from compete at flocks hold? which trait? Crufts this year? □a) 200 □a)4,000 7. The warmest ☐a) Laughter □b)100 spring on □b) Deceit □b) 12.000 □c) 22,000 □c)20 record □c) Vanity □d)5 occured in □d) Cowardice □d)38,000

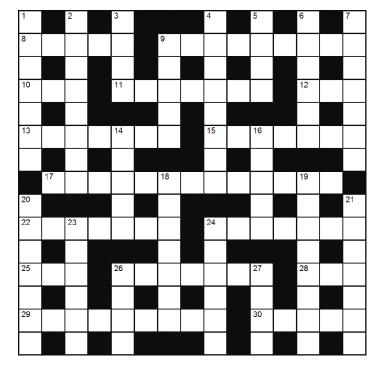
COUNTRYSIDE **CROSSWORD**

by Eddie James

ACROSS

- 8 Imagine changing top for best of milk produce (5)
- 9 Frown, gasp: scrambled eggs found in pond! (9)
- 10 Manage a hen enclosure (3)
- 11 Beetles that feed on plants
- you and I've problems, it's said? (7)
- 12 Mongrel: remedy is to lose tail
- 13 Charges exorbitantly for sheeps' produces (7)
- **15** Prickly plant botanist, finally, let his loose (7)
- 17 Skilled in growing plants... environmentalist identified as culprit (5-8)
- 22 He lacks unusual cockerel's neck feathers (7)
- **24** Dandelion-like plant from Tom's spike of corn? (4,3)
- 25 Wensleydale's main river returning in River Usk (3)
- **26** A Highland Munro's endless volcanic eruption (7)
- 28 Summit is a rubbish dump! (3)
- 29 Long-legged spider an aid to crop gathering (9)
- **30** Chap by south east clergyman's house (5)

1 Use frightening tactics to remove thatch from lawn? (7)



- 2 Ruminant inhabitant of the Cairngorms (8)
- 3 Sea duck, initially small merganser, enters water (4)
- 4 Cumbrian lake where Bluebirds were once seen! (8)
- 5 The Thames at Oxford exists repeatedly (4)
- 6 Oldest bridge on the Thames: 'Coat Rd' perhaps (6)
- 7 Breathed like a horse scattering rodents (7)
- 9 Leaping blood-suckers, one hears - runs away! (5)
- 14 Angler's basket makes cod, initially, gyrate (5)
- 16 Not moving, island tern at

sea (5)

- 18 Rocky islet off southern Ireland - gets speedy online facility! (7)
- 19 Equestrian sport given "Ten"? Fantastic! (8)
- 20 Crow relatives hawks. maybe, swallowing top of hen (7)
- 21 Credit briefly given to higher part of riding tack (7)
- 23 Stone fruit makes her cry out
- 24 Protective bird feather is finished in court (6)
- **26** Somerset river work your iaw! (4)
- 27 Young animal trapped in Ilam bridleway (4)

CROSSWORD SOLUTIONS

FEBRUARY

ACROSS 1Stud farm 6/9 Woolly bear 10 Orton 11 Zips 12 Dingle 14 Ensilage 16 Grasses 17 Mature 19 Tweets 21/30 Cardinal beetle 23 Mycelium 25 Gander 26 Cane 28 Dream 29 Cock 31 Songbird

DOWN 2 The Ridgeway 3 Dor 4 Avocets 5 Mittens 6 Wantsum 7 Ouzel 8 Lop 13 Graze 15 Gordale Scar 18 Teign 20 Spindle 21 Campers 22 Regimen 24 Erect 27 Ale 29 Cob

JANUARY

ACROSS 1 Victoria 6 Blight 9 Sprout 10 Hayling 11/20D Flow Country 13 Rider 15 Slates 18 Cone 19/17/14 Over the hill 20 Cap 21 Sparse 22 ESAs 24 Umbel 28 Forester 29 Instow 31 Skerry 32 Horsefly

DOWN 2 Impel 3 Two 4 Returns 5 Aphid 6 Bay tree 7/26 Irish moss 8 Highlands 12/21 Water soldier 16 Livestock 17 Top 18 Charm 23 Shear 25 Borth 27 Stool 30 See

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SUBSCRIPTIONS AND BACK ISSUES Annual subscription rates (inc P&P): UK/BFPO £54.60; Europe and Republic of Ireland £56; rest of world £58.

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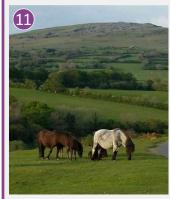
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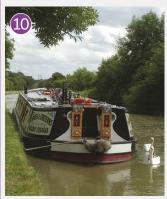


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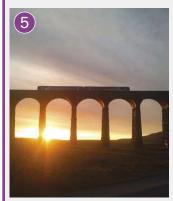
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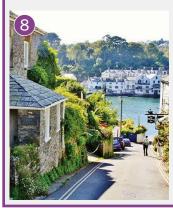


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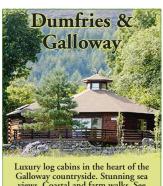


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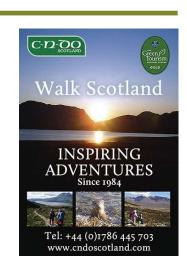
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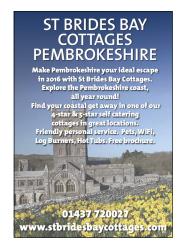
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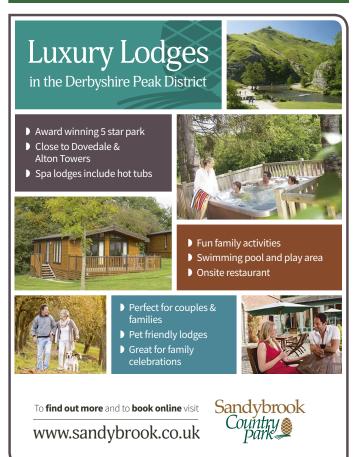


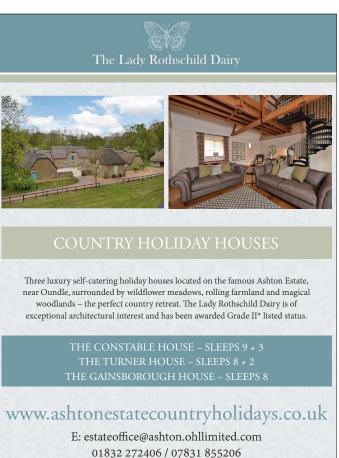


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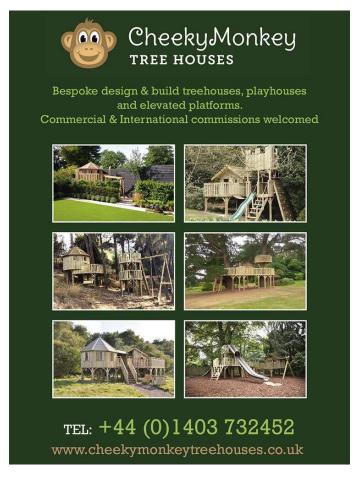


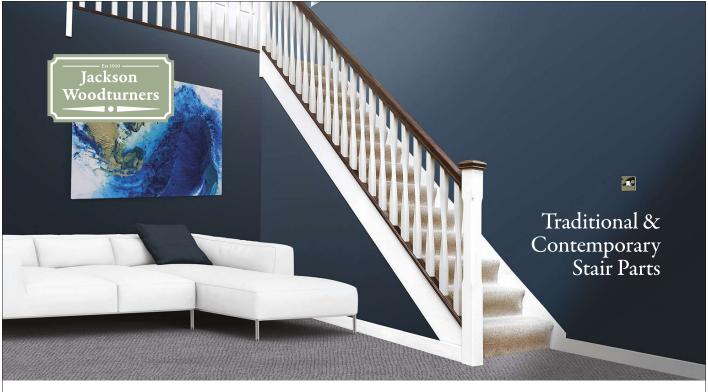
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ERIC ROBSON

The broadcaster, walker and farmer on Alfred Wainwright and his love for the fells

my countryside

Margherita Taylor

The *Countryfile Diaries* presenter and radio DJ discusses the music of the land, the country's best tomatoes and why hedgehogs will forever hold a place in her heart

y favourite outdoor
occupation is walking – it's
great for the heart and the soul.
For me, a long walk through
beautiful countryside is often the
inspiration for a new idea or project or that
perfect time to think through a problem.

However much time you spend in the great outdoors, somehow nature has that amazing power, every so often, to just stop you in your tracks with its beauty.

My rural heroes are people like Roy

Taylor, who I met on *Countryfile Spring Diaries* last year. Roy is a reserves area manager with the RSPB and was diagnosed with motor neurone disease in 2013. He's campaigning to make the countryside more accessible for everyone. It was fantastic to talk to Roy and his family and to see the incredible work he had inspired at RSPB Bempton Cliffs on Yorkshire's east coast.

The radio studios for my shows on Classic FM and Heart are close to many of London's beautiful parks, which have become my sanctuary from a busy day in the city. They allow me to find a moment of calm in the hustle and bustle of city life.

On Classic FM, I play some beautifully soothing pieces by the Scottish composer Alexander Chapman Campbell. He writes and records his music on the west coast of Scotland in a converted byre called Crear House. There are views to the Isles of Islay, Jura and Gigha as well as the lighthouses of Rathlin Island. It sounds like a slice of heaven and a tranquil escape that I'd love to visit.

So many of our great composers have been inspired by the countryside – Vaughan Williams, Butterworth, Elgar.

When I'm travelling across Britain filming, I often look at the landscape with a piece of music running through my mind. I adore



"I often look at the landscape with a piece of music running through my mind"

Elgar's music and wanted to understand what inspired him, so I spent time in the Malvern Hills that he loved so much and at his home, now the Elgar Birthplace Museum, in Lower Broadheath in Worcestershire.

For me, Ralph Vaughan Williams' Fantasia on a Theme by Thomas Tallis is stunning. First performed in 1910 at the Three Choirs Festival, held that year in Gloucester Cathedral, it's a glorious piece of music.

The tomatoes I bought at Christ Church Primary School near Clapham Junction in London were the best I tasted last year. I visited with Countryfile Autumn Diaries and it was lovely to see the benefits of time spent outdoors for the children. With the help of the community and parents, head teacher Colette Morris had turned a piece of disused land near the school into a learning garden. For many of the pupils, it's the only garden they have access to, and the children set up a shop to sell their harvest.

I spent a lot of time filming in Devon and Cornwall last year and loved visiting the sub-tropical Trebah Gardens, Agatha Christie's house Greenway near Galmpton and the cobbled high street at Clovelly.

I was ill-prepared for my first camping trip. Packing the wrong kit, trying to pitch a tent in the dark and having a lack of provisions was a comedy of errors.

My most treasured piece of outdoor kit is a pair of great walking boots. When my eldest goddaughter took her Duke of Edinburgh recently, the one piece of advice I gave her was to get the walking boots right and worn in before she went.

If I were a British wild animal, I'd be a hedgehog. There's just something about them that makes me smile. When I was little, visiting my grandparents in the summer holidays, my Grandma would leave a plate of scraps under the kitchen window every evening for the local hedgehog. Then for a few weeks there were no hedgehog visits. Eventually Mum hedgehog reappeared with a litter of baby hoglets in tow. It was a joy to watch wildlife up close from that window.

If I had a magic wand, I would make access to the countryside easier for all.

I've had the discussion about cream or jam first on a scone many times when filming with the fantastic Escape to the Country team in Devon and Cornwall. I hope to work my way through many more cream teas before I am 100% sure on this one!







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