

project partners

Limestone
Country



The Limestone Country Project is a partnership involving the European Commission's Life Fund, Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority, English Nature, National Trust, Grazing Animals Project, Rare Breeds Survival Trust, National Beef Association and landowners & the farming community.

The Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority is a government body which has a duty to conserve and enhance the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of the Yorkshire Dales, promote opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of the park, and foster the economic and social well being of local communities within the National Park.

English Nature is the statutory body, which achieves, enables and promotes nature conservation in England. It does this by working in partnership with individuals and a wide range of organisations including Government representative bodies, agencies and voluntary organisations.

The National Trust is one of Europe's leading conservation bodies. It is an independent charity which protects over 248,000 hectares (612,000) acres of countryside in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, as well as 600 miles of coastline and over 200 outstanding buildings and gardens. Conserving our countryside and heritage and preserving our environment for future generations are central to the Trust's mission.

The Grazing Animal Project (GAP) was formed in 1997 to help deliver biodiversity targets as part of integrated, viable and sustainable grazing systems throughout the UK. GAP conceived and promoted the idea of Local Grazing Schemes (LGS) in which conservation bodies work together with the livestock industry to organise, rationalise and help deliver grazing that will benefit wildlife within a specific locality.

The Rare Breeds Survival Trust (RBST) was founded in 1973 and works together with scientists, volunteers and breed societies to protect and conserve Britain's traditional breeds of farm livestock. It is not supported by Government funding.

The National Beef Association (NBA) is an independent body representing the interests of UK beef farmers, and which aims to resolve a broad band of issues of current concern to producers.

The Life Fund – The European Union's Life Fund provides funds for nature conservation work on Europe's most important wildlife sites, the Special Areas of Conservation and Special Protection Areas.

Natura 2000 – Natura 2000 is a European network of protected sites, which represent areas of the highest value for natural habitats and species of plants and animals which are rare, endangered or vulnerable in the European Community.

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Limestone Country The Project

'Farming for wildlife on the limestone of the Yorkshire Dales'



what is the project?

Mixed grazing with sheep and upland cattle helped create the wonderful diversity of plant species and other wildlife in the Limestone Country of the Yorkshire Dales.

This has declined in the last 50 years due to a move towards more specialised sheep farming. This decline in cattle farming has led to the growth of rank grasses resulting in the loss of species and structural diversity.

The Limestone Country Project aims to restore this diversity on over 1500 hectares of habitat by encouraging farmers to return to mixed farming using traditional upland breeds of cattle.



what will the project do?

- Grants will be provided to farmers to establish upland cattle herds.
- Whole farm conservation plans will be produced.
- Invasive plants such as thistles and bracken will be controlled over 1000 hectares of land.
- The damaging effects of rabbit grazing will be reduced.
- Upland cattle grazing will be established on Ingleborough and Malham National Nature Reserves.
- A programme of ecological research and monitoring will be undertaken to gain a better understanding of the impacts of grazing on these precious habitats.
- A programme of economic research will be undertaken to help understand the effects on the farm business of a switch to mixed farming with cattle.
- A range of demonstrations, publicity and awareness-raising events will be held to promote the project to a local, national and international audience.
- A project officer will be employed to be a single point of advice and support to farmers in the project.



what is

The Yorkshire Dales National Park contains two special landscapes which have been designated as internationally important Special Areas for Conservation for their outstanding limestone geology, unique habitats and exceptional plants and wildlife.

Concentrated in the uplands around Ingleborough, Malham and Wharfedale (see overleaf) this 'Limestone Country' is one of the nation's most important limestone landscapes.

The 300 million year old glacier scarred Carboniferous limestone and the thin overlying soils in combination with a long history of mixed livestock grazing has resulted in a grassland habitat with a rich diversity of lime-loving grasses and wildflowers.

Limestone Country?

These unique geological conditions have also produced the irreplaceable limestone pavement which is almost exclusively limited to Britain and Ireland.

In addition, the springs and fens in the area have given rise to unique vegetation associated with their lime-rich waters.

These habitats are home to a diverse range of plants and animals, some of which are only found in this landscape. The nationally scarce bird's-eye primrose and rigid buckler fern are unique to limestone country, as well as it being a stronghold for interesting species such as rock rose, blue moor-grass and the northern brown Argus butterfly.

Limestone Country The Project

Whernside

represents one of the most important limestone areas in the Yorkshire Dales. The extensive limestone pavements on Scales Moor support within their grikes (fissures) notable species such as baneberry, lesser meadow-rue and rigid buckler fern.

Ingleborough

is notable for extensive limestone pavements, dry valleys, sinkholes and caves. The range of rocks along with the peat and glacial drift covering the site result in a diversity of vegetation types. The limestone pavements of Colt Park and Scar Close support limestone polypody and globeflower, while the higher crags are populated by arctic-alpines.

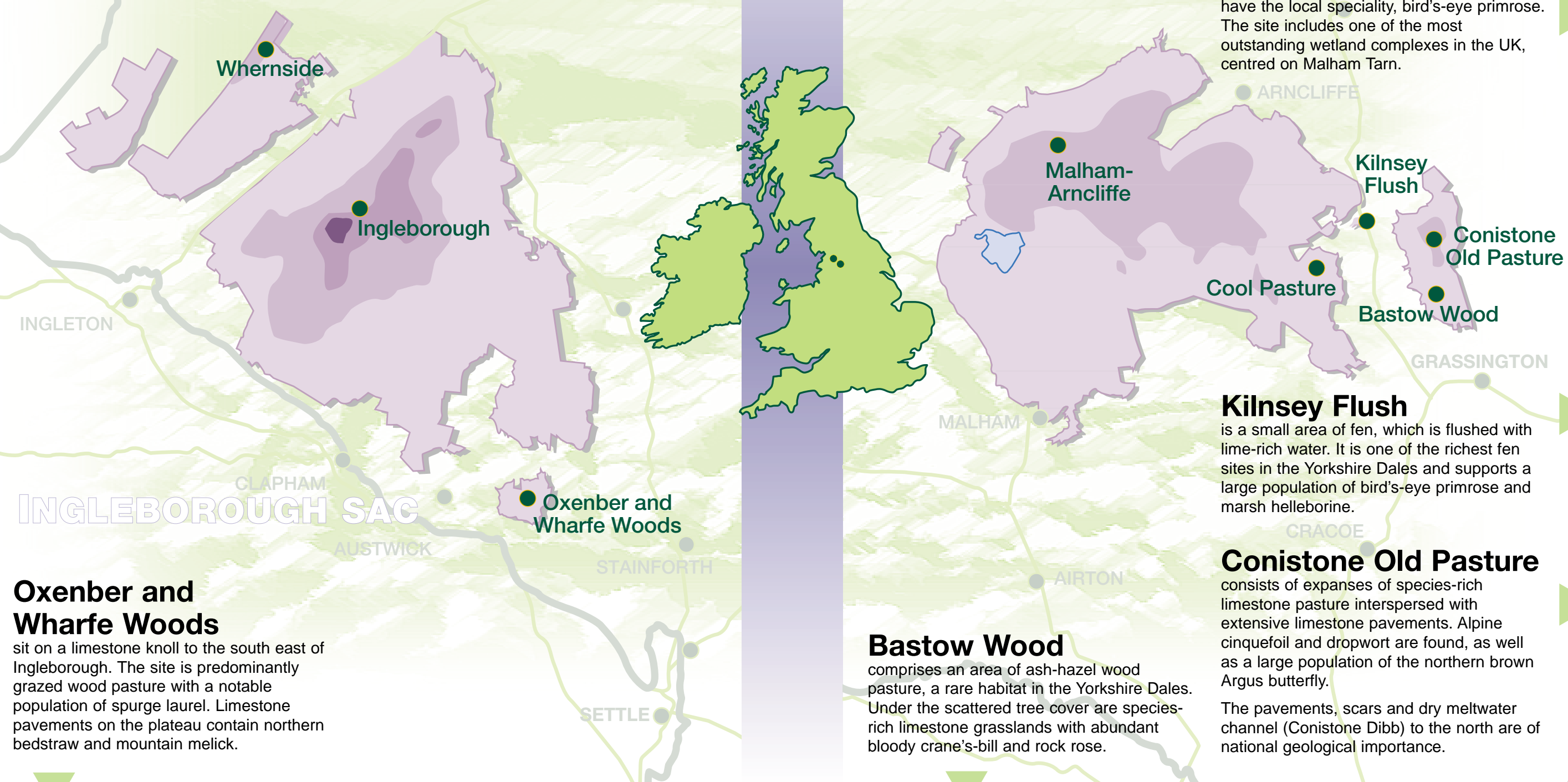
Cool Pasture

is a small limestone pasture, which adjoins the larger Malham-Arncliffe site. The grasslands are largely unimproved and support a diverse range of plant species including moonwort, autumn gentian and limestone bedstraw.

Malham-Arncliffe

is an outstanding site of nationally important limestone features and cave systems.

Species-rich limestone pasture is interspersed with extensive areas of limestone pavements, supporting plants usually confined to woodlands, such as baneberry and angular Solomon's-seal. The grasslands are dominated by blue moor-grass and areas flushed with lime-rich water have the local speciality, bird's-eye primrose. The site includes one of the most outstanding wetland complexes in the UK, centred on Malham Tarn.



Oxenber and Wharfe Woods

sit on a limestone knoll to the south east of Ingleborough. The site is predominantly grazed wood pasture with a notable population of spurge laurel. Limestone pavements on the plateau contain northern bedstraw and mountain melick.

Bastow Wood

comprises an area of ash-hazel wood pasture, a rare habitat in the Yorkshire Dales. Under the scattered tree cover are species-rich limestone grasslands with abundant bloody crane's-bill and rock rose.

Kilnsey Flush

is a small area of fen, which is flushed with lime-rich water. It is one of the richest fen sites in the Yorkshire Dales and supports a large population of bird's-eye primrose and marsh helleborine.

Conistone Old Pasture

consists of expanses of species-rich limestone pasture interspersed with extensive limestone pavements. Alpine cinquefoil and dropwort are found, as well as a large population of the northern brown Argus butterfly.

The pavements, scars and dry meltwater channel (Conistone Dobb) to the north are of national geological importance.