

## **THE NATIONAL TRUST YORKSHIRE REGION**

### **MALHAM TARN ESTATE**

#### General Description

The National Trust's Malham Tarn Estate comprises some of the most dramatic upland limestone landscape in the country, with Malham Tarn forming a natural focal point.

It is situated in Upper Craven in the Yorkshire Pennines, midway between Wharfedale and Ribblesdale, some six miles north-east of Settle. The Estate currently extends to approximately 2,900 hectares (7,200 acres), the majority of which is let on agricultural tenancies and grazing licences, and there are approximately 65 hectares (161 acres) of woodland, mainly around the Tarn.

The Trust owns the sporting and mineral rights over all the land in its ownership (with the exception of Janet's Foss) and also owns the Lordships of the Manors of Malham, Kirkby Malhamdale and Darnbrook. In addition, the Trust has covenants over 75 hectares (187 acres) between the village of Malham and Malham Cove.

The highest land on the Estate is over 650m (2,000') above sea-level and rainfall is around 1600mm (63") per annum.

#### Acquisition History

The Trust's interest in the Malham area began in 1946 when Mrs Hutton-Croft gave Malham Tarn and the surrounding land, Tarn House and Home Farm to the Trust. Middle House Farm and Low Trenhouse were given in the mid-60's and part of High Trenhouse land was purchased when that farm was split up in 1976. Tennant Gill was bought in 1980, and in 1982 the woodland and waterfall at Janet's Foss were acquired. Also in that year, the Trust purchased Ewe Moor with its dramatic limestone pavements.

Further acquisitions have been some 8 hectares (20 acres) of land adjacent to Malham Cove in the summer of 1985, along with covenants over a further 16 hectares (40 acres) and in 1992, 28 hectares (70 acres) of land below Malham Cove.

The 1,143 hectare (2,824 acre) Darnbrook Farm, adjoining existing National Trust property, was acquired in 1995. The farm has extensive moorland, limestone pavement and limestone grassland. Golden plover and dunlin breed on Fountains and Darnbrook Fells. A grant was made for the purchase by the National Heritage Memorial Fund using National Lottery funds.

New House, a small 26 hectare (65 acre) farm was acquired in 1996 for nature conservation reasons. The four hay meadows and small limestone cliff are classified as SSSIs because of their botanical importance.

#### Farming

Six holdings comprise the majority of the National Trust's agricultural land, the remainder being parcels of bare land leased to local farmers.

The farming enterprises are hill sheep and suckler cows with progeny sold on the store market. Hay is the usual winter fodder, but there is increased interest in silage.

All the holdings suffer to varying degrees from visitor pressure; walkers with dogs at lambing time being the main problems.

### Recreation

The main "honeypot" in the area is Malham village, and it is thought that about 10% of these visitors finding their way to the Tarn although no figures for visitor use have been produced. The 36 hectares (90 acres) of land near Malham Cove are under greatest visitor pressure.

Access is on rights of way, with the main one being the Pennine Way, and open access under the Countryside Stewardship Scheme in areas south of the Tarn and down towards Malham village.

A leaflet was first produced for the 1988 season, and about 5,000 copies are distributed each year from leaflet boxes situated on the estate.

Walking is the main recreational use through the Estate, with mountain biking and horse riding also being popular. Some rock climbing is carried out on Great Close Scar outside the bird breeding season. The Tarn has perch and brown trout and fly fishing for trout only, is available from boats only on a daily basis, tickets being sold at the Field Centre.

Townhead Barn was opened in Malham village in 1997 and shows the interior of a traditional Dales barn with an exhibition on farming practices through the years related to the Dales. It is open daily in summer except Mondays, and Sundays only in winter.

### Nature Conservation

The majority of the Estate is within the large Malham-Arncliffe SSSI, and is in the candidate Craven Limestone Complex SAC (Special Area for Conservation) under the European Habitats Directive. The hay meadows at New House are also in the candidate North Pennine Meadows SAC.

The Tarn and its associated wetlands were declared a National Nature Reserve in 1992, and in 1993 was declared a wetland of international importance under the Ramsar Convention. The Tarn is unusual in that it is relatively nutrient rich (mesotrophic) compared with other upland lakes. The wetlands consist of both acidic and alkaline components. It is this juxtaposition of the acid raised bog and the alkaline fen and carr as well as some national plant rarities that make it of interest. The area around the Tarn is jointly managed with the Field Studies Council as a National Nature Reserve. Natural England are also closely involved in the management and give financial assistance.

### Tarn House

The House was built by Thomas Lister, later Lord Ribblesdale, around 1780, who used it as a shooting lodge. In 1852 it was bought by James Morrison whose son Walter inherited it in 1857. Walter Morrison's ownership of the Estate lasted until his death in 1921. He was responsible for building most of the existing farmhouses on the Estate. Many influential Victorian figures of the day visited Tarn House, including Charles Darwin and Charles Kingsley. Kingsley made Malham the scene of part of "The Water Babies" published in 1863. Mrs Hutton-Croft acquired Tarn House and gave it to the National Trust in 1946. The house was subsequently let to the Field Studies Council for use as a Field Studies Centre with this use continuing to the present day.

The woodland around the House was planted in the late 18th and early 19th centuries and added to in Victorian times. It is possible that remnant woodland remained on the steep slopes of Highfolds, north of the Field Centre.

### Staffing

The Property Manager, who also manages Upper Wharfedale, East Scar Top and Braithwaite Hall, is assisted by two Wardens, a Building Co-ordinator, Building Supervisor and a Building Assistant, and an Assistant/Secretary.

For further information contact : Property Manager  
The National Trust  
Estate Office  
Waterhouses  
Settle  
North Yorkshire  
BD24 9PT

Tel. & Fax: 01729 830416

E-mail: [malhamtarn@nationaltrust.org.uk](mailto:malhamtarn@nationaltrust.org.uk)