

COUNTRY DIARY

WHY are so many berries red? Hawthorn, rose hips, guelder rose, mountain ash, bittersweet.....all scarlet and crimson fruits that enliven autumn hedgerows, and all bird dispersed.

The standard answer to the question is that bird vision is particularly sensitive at the red end of the spectrum, which is why they're attracted to red fruits. Bird pollinated flowers in the tropics tend to be red too. But research into bird vision has shown that it's a little more complicated than that. It's now known that birds are also able to see ultraviolet, a wavelength that human eyes are not sensitive to and which lies at the opposite end of the spectrum to red. So we can't make a direct comparison between the colours that we see and the colours that birds see – they have an extra colour in their visual spectrum. Some bird dispersed fruits – like bilberries and blackberries – are blue or black but in their case the waxy bloom on their surface reflects ultraviolet light, which helps to make them attractive to birds. There's another complication too – it's not just the colour of the berries that's important – it's also the contrast between the colour of the berries and the background, including ultraviolet light reflected or absorbed by shiny or dull leaf surfaces, that contributes to how visible a fruit is to a bird. Experience counts too – juvenile and adult redwings show different preferences when presented with choices between fruit colours, so learning has a role in associating fruit colour with the best food sources.

What is certain is that simply trying to interpret what birds (or any other animals) see according to what we see is unlikely to give a true impression of the way the world looks to them. They have their own view of their surroundings.

Phil Gates

BIRDWATCH

THE second half of September always marks the start of the really exciting autumn migration period – depending, of course, on the wind and weather.

With winds predominantly westerly, the past week has not provided large numbers of migrants but this has been compensated for by quality for those willing to put in time in their favourite patches.

Yellow-browed Warblers delighted watchers in several areas. Singles were present from Thursday to Sunday at Marsden Quarry, on Friday and Saturday at Whitburn Country Park while another was at Seaham on Friday. Another showed briefly in Holy Island village on Saturday when an early Lapland Bunting near Lindisfarne Castle.

A Common Rosefinch frequented the Farne Islands until at least Friday while in North Yorkshire a Greenish Warbler at Scalby Lodge Pond on Friday was followed by a Barred Warbler on Saturday.

A Red-backed Shrike was in the Dorman's Pool/Reclamation Pond area from Saturday through to at least Tuesday. Watchers there received a bonus on Sunday in the form of a fly-over Honey Buzzard, the only one reported.

Rare waders were in distinctly short supply which made a Pectoral Sandpiper at Bishop Middleham a good find for an inland site. Migrant owls were also scarce. One tired and apparently newly-arrived adult Long-eared Owl was found in a sheltered ditch in the Crooked Lonnen, Holy Island, on Monday.

Ospreys were reported over Redcar on Saturday and Sunday. One long-stayer remained at Lindisfarne until at least Tuesday, frequenting the Pilgrims Way, the poles marking the safe route across the flats to Holy Island and fed on salmon, sea trout, mullet and flat fish.

As you may not know, Brian Unwin is having a very rough time of it at the moment and is currently receiving treatment in the Royal Victoria Infirmary, Newcastle, and has asked me to fill in for him temporarily. I'm sure you will all want join in wishing him a good recovery.

Ian Kerr

WALKS



By
Mark Reid

POINTS OF INTEREST

Awonderful moorland walk that explores the broad, windswept ridge that separates Wharfedale and Littondale.

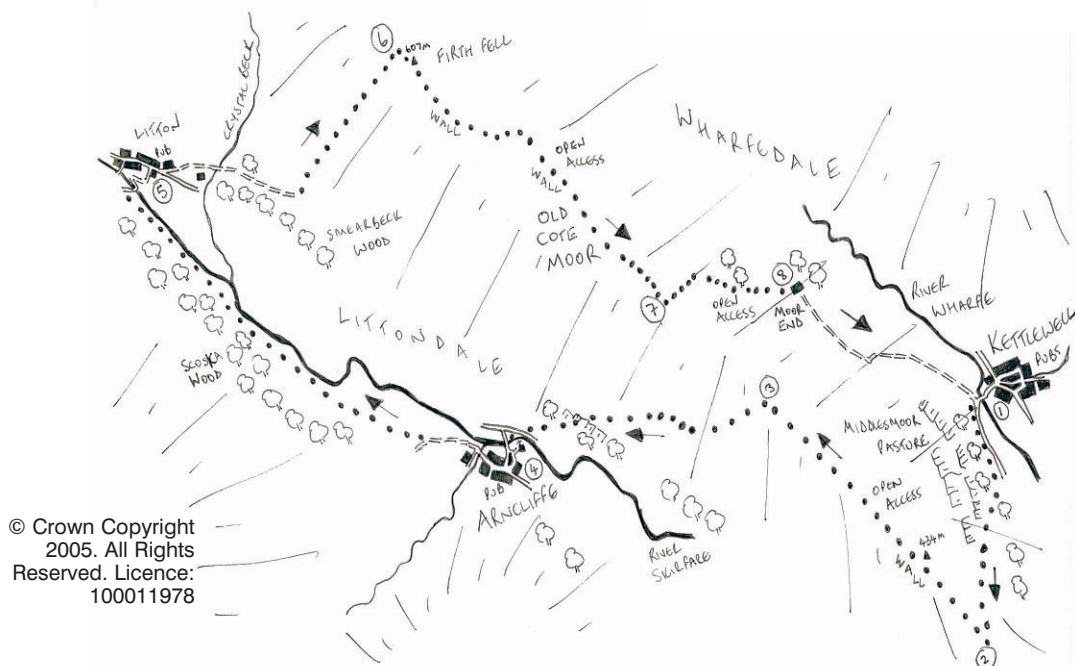
THE WALK

1 From the car park at Kettlewell, turn right along the main road (away from the village) over the bridge across the River Wharfe and follow the road bending round to the left, then take the permissive path on your right that runs parallel with the road (signpost Hawkswick). Follow this path straight on (road on your left) along the foot of the steep hillside for 400 metres to join the footpath beside a gate on your left. Follow the path up then, where it forks after a short distance, follow the right-hand path (signpost footpath) heading gradually up across the steep wooded hillside to reach a gate in a wall across your path. Head through the gate and carry straight on rising up alongside the wall on your right then, where this wall bends to the right, follow the path up to the right and through a large gap in a wall just to the left of a ruinous barn. After this wall-gap, bear left across the small enclosure and through a gap in a tumbledown wall then follow the path up the hillside (wall/woodland on your right) to reach a ladder stile over a wall. After the ladder stile, head up to the left to quickly reach another ladder-stile, after which bear slightly right up onto a low, limestone scar then carry straight on along the grassy path gently rising up across the moorland for 800 metres then curving round to the right to reach a ladder stile over the wall along the top of the broad moorland ridge.

2 Do NOT cross this ladder stile but turn right alongside the wall on your left and follow this gently rising up along the top of the moorland ridge (Open Access Land) for 1.25 km (passing the Trig Point just across to your right) to reach a tumbledown wall across your path. Cross the wall and carry straight on alongside the wall on your left heading up across the top of the ridge, over another wall then on to reach a third wall and a ladder-stile. Cross the ladder-stile over the wall junction, and continue alongside the wall on your left climbing up a short but steep bank before heading straight on across the top of the broad moorland ridge to reach another wall across your stile (ladder stile and gate in the wall). Head over the ladder-stile and walk straight on across the flat moorland ridge for 350 metres to reach a ladder-stile over the wall to your left and a grassy path coming in from your right (SD 953 723).

3 Cross the ladder-stile, after which follow the grassy path bearing slightly right to soon reach another ladder-stile, after which follow the path to the left heading down across the moorland ridge gradually bearing away from the wall on your left. After 500 metres (Arncliffe comes into view below) follow the path curving to the right then gradually slanting down across the heather-covered hillside, over a tumbledown wall then continue down to reach a kissing-gate in a wall across your path, after which continue down across the hillside to reach a stile over a fence along the top of a wooded limestone scar. Cross the stile then head down the limestone gully to your left (take care) then follow the path to the right slanting down across the steep wooded/rocky hillside to reach a gate in a fence, then continue along the path slanting down across the hillside across two fields to join a road. At the road, take the path

Old Cote Moor



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WALKFACTS

Distance: 19.25 km (12 miles)
Time: 7 hours
Maps: OS Explorer OL30 – always carry a map.
Start/Parking: Pay & Display car park at Kettlewell
Refreshments: Pubs at Kettlewell, Arncliffe and Litton
Terrain: This walk follows moorland paths and tracks for most of the way across the broad ridge of Old Cote Moor, with some Open Access walking across moorland. The section between Arncliffe and Litton follows field and riverside paths. This walk involves two steep climbs, particularly from Litton onto Firth Fell, as well as a number of steep descents. The moorland ridge is rough and boggy underfoot and is also exposed to the elements.
How to get there: Kettlewell lies along the B6160 in Upper Wharfedale.
Open Access Land: This walk heads across Open Access Land on Old Cote Moor. See local signs for information or visit openaccess.gov.uk. NB: Dogs are not permitted on this Access Land.
Caution: This is a strenuous walk up onto the high moorland ridge between Wharfedale and Littondale, climbing up to 607 metres above sea level. The ground is rough and boggy. OS map, compass and hill-walking gear essential.

opposite and follow the riverside path across the field to join the road beside the bridge across the River Skirfare. Turn left over the bridge and follow the road straight on to emerge onto Arncliffe's village green.

4 As you emerge out onto the green, follow the road to the right across the middle of the green (passing the Falcon Inn across to your left) and out of the bottom right corner of the village along the road towards Malham to soon reach a bridge across Cowside Beck. Cross the bridge, immediately after which (where the road bends sharp left) take the stony track straight ahead (signpost Litton, Halton Gill). Follow this walled stony track straight on for 500 metres until you reach a stile beside a gate at the end of the track. Cross the stile and head straight on, keeping close to the wall on your left, to reach a wall-stile in the corner of the field, after which a clear path heads straight on across pastures to reach the Nature

Reserve of Scoska Wood. A well-marked riverside path (the limestone riverbed is usually dry) leads through the Nature Reserve to reach a small wall-gate at the end of the Nature Reserve, after which turn immediately left through a bridge-gate then right and follow the grassy path straight on across fields to reach a gate that brings you once more alongside the dry riverbed. Follow the riverside path straight on then, at the end of the riverside path, turn left through a wall-gate then turn right across the field to join a wall-corner. Carry straight on alongside the wall on your right then, as you approach the house at the end of this field, head right through a gate on to reach a stony track opposite a ruined barn. Turn right along the track, over a large ford across the Skirfare then follow the track to the left alongside the dry riverbed then, where the track forks, follow the right-hand walled track up to join the road at Litton. (If ford impassable – as you join the stony track opposite the ruined barn, turn left then immediately right after the barn over a small bridge across a stream after which turn right down alongside the stream then bear left across fields to reach a footbridge across the river, after which head straight up between the houses to join the road through Litton. Turn right to reach the Queen's Arms).

5 Turn right along the road passing in front of the Queen's Arms immediately after which take the lane to the left (signpost Buckden™) passing to the right of the pub and follow this up through a farmyard then continue straight on up along the walled stony track to reach a gate, after which continue on along the grassy track down to a footbridge across Crystal Beck. Cross the footbridge and through the gate ahead, after which head straight on up the steep grassy hillside alongside the wall on your right to reach a gate. Head through the gate and continue straight on along the stony path climbing steeply up alongside the wall (above Smearbeck Wood) then, after a short distance, the stony path slants steeply up the hillside (leaving the wall behind) to reach another gate in a wall. Head through this gate and continue up along the stony path slanting up across the steep hillside then through a large wall gap (no gate), after which follow the grassy path as it swings sharply round to the left to join the wall on your left which you follow straight up the hillside for 0.5 km to reach a bridge-gate in a wall across your path (limestone changes to gritstone beneath your feet). Head through this bridge-gate and continue straight on for a further 0.75 km

alongside the wall climbing more steeply up across some low gritstone outcrops, above which the path begins to level out and leads up (still with the wall on your left) across the wide summit ridge (stone-flagged path) to reach a gate in a wall corner across your path on the summit of Firth Fell.

6 Head through the gate then turn immediately right alongside the wall on your right heading across the top of the broad moorland ridge (Open Access Land) to soon reach a Trig Point just to your left marking the top of Firth Fell (607 metres). Continue straight on alongside the wall on your right for a further 900 metres to reach a distinct S-bend in the wall on your right, at which point turn left straight across the moorland (east) for 200 metres to reach a ladder stile in a wall corner (SD 933 743). Cross the ladder-stile then turn right alongside the wall on your right and follow this across the top of the broad ridge for 1.75 km down to reach a bridgeway across your path, a gate in the wall on your right and a tumbledown wall on front of you (SD 945 730).

7 Turn left along the bridgeway (alongside the tumbledown wall on your right) heading down towards Wharfedale to reach a tumbledown wall across your path after 300 metres (wall ends on your right). Cross the wall then bear right down across the moorland (ignore path straight on down the hillside) to reach the right-hand corner of the small copse of trees enclosed by a wall (SD 951 731). Pass to the right of this enclosed copse and continue in the same direction (heading towards Moor End Farm sheltered by trees ahead) down a short but steep bank and over a tumbledown wall then bear slightly right down across the rough field to reach a metal gate in the bottom right corner of the field (signpost). Head through the gate and follow the path straight on then round into the yard of Moor End Farm.

8 Head through the yard in front of Moor End Farm and through a gate beside a barn, after which follow the track straight on across the moorland before winding steeply down back to reach the road bridge across the Wharfe. Turn left over the bridge back into Kettlewell.

Mark Reid
Author of The Inn Way guidebooks.
innway.co.uk

■ While every effort is made to ensure that walks are accessible and are rights of way, The Northern Echo cannot guarantee that fields, paths or pubs will be open. If you are walking in the countryside, please remember the Country Code.
www.northernecho.co.uk/leisure/walks