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**WILD WAYS AND PATHS OF PLEASURE: ACCESS TO BRITISH
WATERFALLS, 1500 - 2000**

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ABSTRACT

In Britain the rise of tourism, largely associated with the Romantic taste for landscape, encouraged travel to relatively inaccessible areas. Among travellers in search of the Picturesque and the Sublime, waterfalls were particularly popular, but these were commonly difficult and dangerous places to visit. This paper examines the impact of tourism on the evolution of the landscape at waterfall sites over a period during which people travelled to tourist centres on horseback, by coach, by rail and by motor vehicle. Drawing on topographical, travel and tourist literature from the sixteenth century to 2000, together with extensive field observation, this study considers the evolution from the 'natural' to the designed landscape created to meet the needs of, and to attract visitors. It demonstrates how, while facilitating visits to natural attractions such as waterfalls, improved access and the provision of amenities have changed valued landscapes and, hence, the visitor's experience of them.

Keywords: British waterfalls; tourism; roads and footpaths; landscape history

INTRODUCTION

For those who enjoy landscape and make the effort to visit places of great natural beauty, part of the pleasure can be the journey to get there. Among the most popular scenic attractions are waterfalls (Hudson, 1998). Typically found in rugged country, these beauty spots were often difficult to reach until roads and footpaths to them were improved or, in many cases, specially built. 'More time and energy has been expended on the history of roads and tracks than on any other feature of the English landscape and most of it to little effect' (Taylor, 1988, p.191). Thus wrote Christopher Taylor, a decade after the publication of his book, *Roads and tracks of Britain* (Taylor, 1979). If roads and tracks present difficulties for the landscape historian, footpaths, with their complex origins, are no less a challenge. Over the past three hundred years, Britain's highways and byways have undergone remarkable transformation, both in their spatial network and in their construction. This was largely a result of the Industrial Revolution and subsequent economic and technological developments; but there is another factor, one often overlooked, that contributed significantly to the evolution of the roads, tracks and footpaths in parts of Britain – recreation and tourism.

As Patmore (1970, p.246) observed, 'most people's enjoyment of the countryside is compounded of three distinct elements: visual appreciation of the rural scene; active enjoyment on restricted areas of land and water; and movement along clearly defined corridors of access.' It is with the first and last of these three elements that this paper is mainly concerned, tracing the development of visitor access ways to British rural beauty spots as a process of landscape evolution. In particular, it examines the changing character of the approaches to waterfalls, popular landscape features which,

left in their wild natural state, are commonly inaccessible to all but the fittest and most adventurous enthusiast.

The aesthetic appeal of waterfalls and their importance as tourist attractions have been discussed elsewhere (Hudson, 1998, 1999, 2000). In this paper attention is given to the way in which improved access to waterfalls and the provision of amenities to cater for tourists altered the landscape, the object of 'the tourist gaze' (Urry, 1990), thus changing the visitor's experience of it. The study draws extensively on topographical, travel and tourist literature from the sixteenth century to the present, together with the author's own field observations over many years of 'waterfalling', to use a term borrowed from that prolific writer of books on waterfall walks, Mary Welsh (1992, p.7).

FALLS BY THE WAYSIDE

Early tourists tended to keep mainly to the principal roads that had evolved to serve the needs of trade and commerce, but, as the taste for wild scenery grew with the rise of Romanticism, the desire to visit remote, rugged, often mountainous districts increased. Most of these areas were poorly provided with roads, and a strong demand arose for improved access. For visitors in search of the Sublime it was often necessary to negotiate very difficult, even dangerous, terrain in order to experience the 'delightful horror' (Schama, 1995, pp.447 – 462) that gave pleasure to the connoisseur of landscape. This was particularly true of waterfalls, landscape features that appealed greatly to lovers of sublime and picturesque scenery, but which were typically hidden in narrow, rocky, often densely wooded gorges. Because of the difficulties of access that these settings presented, many people who had a taste for

this kind of river scenery were often unable to go, or at least were unwilling to endure the discomforts or take the risks of such an expedition.

In the early days of travel the only waterfalls that were likely to be well known to any but the local populace were those visible or audible from the road. In the account of his travels in or about the years 1535 - 1543, Leland mentioned the falls on the River Ure which could, and still can be seen from Aysgarth Bridge in North Yorkshire (Leland, 1910, p.138). Also familiar to readers in past centuries were the two falls whose roar could be heard from the town of Kendal, on the road between London and Carlisle via Lancaster. Several writers, including William Camden (1551- 1623), John Speed (1552?- 1629) and Celia Fiennes (1662-1741), noted the local weather lore associated with the sound of these falls (Camden, 1610; Speed, 1646; Fiennes, 1982). Some falls were well-known as salmon leaps, notably those on the River Teifi, South Wales, described by Camden (1610, p. 654). No doubt, from the earliest times many of these places were reached by tracks beaten by generations of fishermen and, probably, others who enjoyed the spectacle of fish leaping up the falls.

Among those with the leisure and means, travel for recreation and pleasure became increasingly fashionable during the eighteenth century, and, especially when war discouraged British travellers from touring continental Europe, they sought destinations in the British Isles. For tourists with a taste for landscape many guidebooks were written to assist them find and appreciate the scenic attractions now being 'discovered' in the British Isles. Some of the most popular landscape features were 'cascades, water-falls and cataracts' (West ,1784, p.76), which delighted the 'cataractist', as one enthusiast described himself (Ousby, 1990, p.183). Many tourists

went on excursions ‘to hunt waterfalls’ (Wordsworth, 1941, p.183), following in the footsteps of writers and artists who had celebrated those ‘sublime and beautiful objects’ (Beckford, 1790, p.227) in their published works. Among the many who wrote about and painted waterfalls were poets Wordsworth, Southey and Burns, and artists Jacob More, Francis Towne, Richard Wilson and, especially, J.M.W.Turner, whose works were reproduced in large numbers as engravings. These images acted as ‘markers’ (MacCannell, 1976, p.41) which promoted waterfall sites and sights as tourist attractions, encouraging increasing numbers of visitors to take to the highways and byways of highland Britain.

HIGHWAYS, BYWAYS AND WILD WAYS

Where good roads passed through mountain country abounding in waterfalls, travellers might be able to view some of them without having to make their way over difficult terrain. It was partly for this reason that guidebook author, Thomas West (1784, p.77) recommended the ‘sixteen miles of excellent mountain road’ between Ambleside and Keswick: ‘If the season be rainy, or immediately after rain, all possible variety of cascades, water-falls, and cataracts are seen on this ride.’

When the quest for scenic beauty took the traveller away from the main roads onto mountain tracks and paths, however, progress could become very difficult indeed. Setting out in 1768 to see the Craven district of Yorkshire, the poet Thomas Gray travelled from Lancaster to Settle ‘by a fine turnpike road’, but, in order to visit Gordale Scar, a limestone gorge famous for its overhanging cliffs and cascading waterfall, he had to endure a bad road, ‘such a road!’, followed by a walk of ‘a mile over very rough ground’ (Gray, 1902, p.276) Similarly, when Arthur Young set out

to see ‘the fall of *Tees* [High Force], the greatest natural curiosity in this part of the world’ (Young, 1770a, p.194), the first part of his route was along a pleasant road from Bowes to Barnard Castle. After passing through Newbiggin, in upper Teesdale, it became necessary to ‘ride through rapid streams, struggle along the sides of rocks, cross bleak mountains, and ride up the channels of torrents as the only sure road over bogs’ (Young, 1770a, p.198). Arriving with his guide on the banks of the Tees within the sound of High Force, it remained necessary to traverse some very difficult terrain in order to view the falls. Young described their progress thus: ‘Making use of our hands as well as our feet, and descending almost like a parrot, we crawled from rock to rock, and reached from bough to bough till we got to the bottom of this noble fall (Young, 1770a, p.198). Reflecting on his exhilarating 30 kilometre journey between Barnard Castle and High Force, a route enlivened by ‘continual waterfalls’, Young described the excursion as, ‘A morning’s ride well worth a journey of a thousand miles to travel’ (Young, 1770a, p.201). Another tourist, John Byng, later Viscount Torrington, who visited High Force in 1792, recorded similar experiences. He and his party followed their guide ‘thro’ many hilly, boggy fields, a mile of walk, till we enter’d a little birch wood; when, being anxious to stand beneath the fall, we endured a most fatiguing descent, and a very dangerous crawl at the river’s edge, over great stones, and sometimes up to our knees in water, till we arrived at the very bottom of the fall. – The sweat running from my brow, and a flap of my coat, my only coat, nearly torn off by the bushes ... These are noble falls of water, unequal’d I’d suppose in this country...’ (Byng, 1936,p.70).

Clearly, enthusiastic and vigorous travellers such as John Byng and Arthur Young were willing to endure considerable hardship and danger in order to see one of

England's finest waterfalls, and felt that the reward was well worth the effort. For many less robust tourists, however, the difficult parts of the ride and the final scramble down the thickly wooded cliffs would have been an unpleasant, even frightening experience. It would probably have deterred the more faint-hearted and less agile visitor.

This sequence, a relatively long but fairly easy journey by good main roads followed by often uncomfortable travel over inferior country roads and tracks, then a walk or scramble through difficult rough country, was, and to a degree remains, typical of a journey to visit waterfalls. The eighteenth century in Britain was a period of great advances in transport and communications, and improvements in the roads made travel much easier. This, together with the fashionable taste for romantic scenery, led to a growth in tourism, particularly in mountain areas that had previously been relatively inaccessible. Regions such as North Wales and the English Lake District were evolving from what Butler (1980) termed the exploration stage to the involvement stage of tourist area development, and were being actively promoted as tourist destinations. An important role in this was played by the writers of guidebooks. These not only described the scenic attractions and gave directions, but indicated the nature of the roads and footpaths by which visitors could reach viewpoints and other places of interest. Thomas West, author of a guide to the Lake District which Wordsworth read as a schoolboy, took pains to assure his readers of that the area was now well served with good roads. Visitors no longer had cause to fear travelling through these mountains where, not long before, travellers had to endure bad roads in order to enjoy the scenic attractions. West (1784, p.2) wrote 'What may be *now* mentioned as another inducement to visit these natural beauties, is

the goodness of the roads which are much improved since Mr. *Gray* made his tour in 1765, and Mr. *Pennant* his, in 1772'. Elsewhere he described one road as 'narrow yet safe' (West, 1784, p.90), another having 'nothing of the danger remaining that Mr. *Gray* apprehended here; the road being carefully kept open' (West, 1784, p.91). Describing an excursion to a waterfall near Keswick, West (1784: 129-130) gave the assurance that visitors would be 'free from all anxiety of mind in the approach', adding that, 'Whoever would enjoy, with ease and safety, Alpine views, and pastoral scenes in the sublime stile (sic), may have them in this morning ride'. For the tourist, in this and other respects, Britain had many advantages over the continent, or so West (1784, p.133) advised his readers:

If the roads in some places be narrow and difficult, they are at least safe. No villainous banditti haunt the mountains: innocent people live in the dells. Every cottager is a narrative of all he knows: and mountain virtue, and pastoral hospitality are found at every farm. This constitutes a pleasing difference betwixt travelling here and on the continent, where every inn-holder is an extortioner, and every voiturin an imposing rogue.

While it was becoming easier to reach tourist areas by road, many of the scenic attractions remained difficult to reach from the major centres. This was particularly true in the case of waterfalls which are typically found in very rugged and confined settings. A good example of this is the Yorkshire village of Ingleton, today famous for its Waterfalls Walk, which lay on the 'fine turnpike road' used by Gray on his journey from Lancaster to Settle. Although he described Ingleton and the famous mountain, Ingleborough, which rises above it, the romantic poet made no mention of the

waterfalls which later contributed significantly to the village's development as a tourist centre. Perhaps he was unaware of their existence, hidden as they were in densely wooded narrow, rocky ravines which even a century later presented difficulties and dangers to those who went to see them (Speight, 1892).

PLEASURE GROUNDS, PLEASURE PATHS AND PLEASURE ROADS

With the growing demands of tourism, inconveniences such as these naturally provoked complaint and led to suggestions for improvement. Among those who suggested improved access to scenic attractions, such as waterfalls, was Arthur Young, who apparently accepted with equanimity the hazards he encountered on his way to High Force. Young's experiences in the Lake District moved him to make a plea to landowners for better access to beauty spots and viewpoints. The following extract from Young's account of a tour of northern England expresses his views on the matter:

But it is much to be regretted that art does not yield more of her assistance, not in decoration, for the lake [Derwentwater] wants it not, but in enabling the spectator to command, with greater ease, the luxuriant beauties and striking views which to so many travellers are hitherto quite unknown: There are a vast many edges and precipices, bold projections of rock, pendent cliffs (sic) and wild romantic spots, which command the most delicious scenes, but which cannot be reached without the most perilous difficulty: To such points of view, winding paths should be cut in the rock, and resting places made for the weary traveller: ... At the bottoms of the rocks also, something of the same nature should be executed for the better viewing of the romantic cascades, which might be

exhibited with a little art, in a variety that would astonish (Young, 1770b, pp.155-156).

For making such improvements, West was able to commend one owner of a property at Rydal, a man whose example he held up for others to follow. West (1784, pp.77-78) wrote:

At Rydal-hall are two cascades worthy of note. One is a little above the house, to which Sir *Michael le Fleming* has made a convenient path, that brings you upon it all at once ... This gentleman's example in opening up a road to the fall recommends itself strongly to others of this country, which abounds with so many objects of curiosity, and which all travellers of the least taste would visit with pleasure, could they do so with convenience and safety.

With the growing demand for easier access to scenic places, footpaths and drives to viewpoints and beauty spots, including many waterfalls, were built by land owners all over Britain. In addition to the tracks themselves, various amenities were often provided for the convenience and pleasure of the visitors. Wayside seats, rustic bridges and all manner of summerhouses were among the wide variety of artificial features introduced into these favoured places. This way, wild, 'natural' areas were often converted into designed landscapes developed for the enjoyment of people of leisure with a taste for picturesque scenery and outdoor recreation.

In her journal account of a tour of Scotland, in 1803, with brother William and friend Coleridge, Dorothy Wordsworth referred to what were termed 'pleasure-grounds', 'pleasure-roads', 'pleasure-paths' and 'pleasure-houses' when describing landscapes of this kind. One of the many pleasure-grounds developed beside tumbling rivers was that at the Falls of Clyde, and Dorothy recorded in considerable detail the way which tourists took when on a visit to these famous waterfalls in their carefully designed and managed setting. She wrote, 'We walked, after we had entered the private-grounds, perhaps two hundred yards along a gravel carriage-road, then came to a little side gate, which opened upon a narrow gravel path under trees, and in a minute and a half, or less, were directly opposite the great waterfall' (Wordsworth , 1941, p.222).

Having enjoyed the view, they retraced their steps, returning to the main carriageway which soon led them to what William Wordsworth described as 'an ell-wide gravel walk', which afforded different views of the falls. An ell is an archaic measure of length, equivalent to just over a metre in today's terms. Continuing her account, Dorothy wrote, 'We sat upon a bench, placed for the sake of one of these views, whence we looked upon the waterfall', after which they made their way along the same path, coming to 'a pleasure house', a circular moss-lined hut with seats and a table inside. Dorothy and her companions later learned that 'huts of the same kind were common in the pleasure-grounds of Scotland' (Wordsworth, 1941p.224).

Many of the amenities and picturesque features that had been introduced into the landscape met with the disapproval of the visitors. At the Falls of Clyde, 'Along the whole path were openings at intervals for views of the river, but, as almost always happens in gentlemen's grounds, they were injudiciously managed (Wordsworth, 1941, p.224). Parapets, painted seats and other 'devices' put there, no doubt, for the

pleasure, comfort and safety of the visitor, were objects that could give offence to the more sensitive observer. Later on the tour, Dorothy was also critical of the treatment of the environs of the Falls of Bruar, which, on the poetic advice of Burns, had been afforested, using pines and larches regarded by some as inappropriate for the site. The visitors would have preferred ‘the natural trees of Scotland, birches, ashes, mountain-ashes, etc.’, Dorothy opining that, ‘At present nothing can be uglier than the whole chasm of the hillside with its formal walks ... It does not surely deserve the name of pleasure-path’ (Wordsworth, 1941, pp.351-352).

A few years earlier, in an account of a walk to some little waterfalls in Somerset, Dorothy had criticised the excesses of Romantic improvers of landscape. Here, she said, ‘art had deformed’ the beauties of Nature, by the planting of ‘unnaturalised trees’ and the erection of ‘ruins, hermitages, etc. etc.’ (Wordsworth, 1941, p.15). In his remarkably detailed book on Scottish waterfalls, Stott (1987) mentions several picturesque ‘improvements’ at waterfall sites, including one made as early as 1708 at Cora Linn, the most famous of the Falls of Clyde. In that year Sir James Carmichael had a pavilion built, with mirrors placed in such a way as to make it appear that the water was falling onto the spectator. Later improvements included a rustic staircase leading down to the falls, constructed in 1829. Another example noted by Stott was the rustic cottage built in 1801 facing Auchenlillyllynn Spout in Carron Glen. On one occasion, the flood-swollen waterfall burst through the dining room window, the stream rushing into the kitchen and cellar. The building was eventually left to fall into ruin. Welsh waterfalls, too, were being ‘improved’, and at Pistyll Rhaeadr ‘a large room ... for tea drinking’ was built, but had fallen into disuse by the time of Byng’s visit in 1793 (Byng, 1935, p.286). For some, including Dorothy Wordsworth,

waterfalls were best left as far as possible in their natural state. Commenting on one near Inverary, Scotland, she wrote, 'The waterfall is not remarkable for anything but the good taste with which it has been left to itself, though there is a pleasure-road from the Castle to it' (Wordsworth, 1941, p.299).

RAILWAYS AND WATERFALL DAYS

Dorothy and William Wordsworth both lived to see the impact of the railway on the English countryside, a development deplored by many, including the poet. One of the consequences of this transport innovation was an increased influx of tourists into areas of beautiful landscape. Direct rail links between large cities and areas already known for their scenic beauty encouraged short stay excursions, including day trips (Patmore, 1970). Tourists and trippers who arrive at railway stations in places noted for their landscape beauty usually wish to visit some of the scenic attractions of the district. Waterfalls were among the natural features for which many tourist centres grew famous, and, with the advent of the railway, these popular attractions became the goals of ever-increasing numbers of visitors in search of beautiful river scenery. In northern England, where the modern railway had its beginnings, there are many places in which waterfalls played an important role in tourism development. Two notable Yorkshire examples are Ingleton, in the Pennine Dales, and Goathland, in the North York Moors, both of which developed considerably as tourist centres in consequence of the coming of the railway.

Goathland waterfalls

The 'violent swift brookes' of Blackamore, the name by which the North York Moors were formerly known, were noted by Camden (1610, p.722). Two centuries later, a local history was published which contained an account of the scenery on one of the

tributaries of the Esk near the moorland village of Goathland. In the book, this stream was described as ‘a black and rocky mountain-river, the banks of which are rudely ornamented with wood, and afford a great variety of wild and romantic scenery’, and the author gave a detailed description of a ‘singular cascade’, clearly Mallyan Spout, hidden in that wooded, rocky valley (Graves, 1808, p. 291). At that time Goathland was still a remote spot, although the turnpike road between Whitby and Pickering via Blue Bank and Saltersgate crossed the moors only three kilometres away. Popular awareness of Mallyan Spout and other waterfalls near Goathland remained slight until the scenic attractions of the area were publicized as part of a railway promotion scheme.

The railway, built under an Act of 1833, reached from Whitby to Grosmont in 1835, and was continued to Pickering in 1836 (Appleton, 1958). It was first operated with single carriages, each drawn by one or two horses, depending on the gradient. Steam locomotives were introduced in 1847. The line was originally planned to follow the valley of the West Beck past Mallyan Spout (Joy, 1973, p.11), but it was eventually built on a route which included an incline between Beck Hole and Goathland. In the early years, the coaches were attached to a rope and hauled up the incline by an ingenious pulley and counterweight system, later replaced by a stationary steam engine. This was by-passed in 1865 by a stretch of line that followed the precipitous valley-side above Eller Beck which cascades over Thomason Foss and other little falls (Browne, 1946; Ramsden, 1965). It was only after the coming of the railway to Goathland that the area became popular with tourists. ‘Before the times of railroads, these glens were but little known and visited, (Robinson, 1860, p.234).

To help promote the Whitby and Pickering Railway, a remarkable book was published under the following title: *Illustrations of the Scenery on the Line of the Whitby and Pickering Railway, in the North Eastern Part of Yorkshire. From Drawings by G. Dodgson. With a Short Description of the District and Undertaking, by Henry Belcher* (Belcher, 1836). This was written ‘in the humble expectation of giving to the Whitby and Pickering Railway an interest in public estimation, on other grounds than those which are usually attached to similar undertakings’ (Belcher, 1836, p.vi). Clearly, there was a recognition that, in addition to the prospects of revenue from the usual sources, such as agriculture, mining and manufacture, this railway could profit from the touristic exploitation of the relatively untapped scenic resources of the area.

Not the least of these were the picturesque waterfalls. Among the falls mentioned by Belcher were Falling Foss and some smaller cascades within easy reach of Whitby, but he gave more attention to the waterfalls in ‘the lovely secluded Vale of Goathland’ (Belcher, 1836, p. 40), now made accessible by rail. One ‘singularly beautiful cascade’ described by Belcher is recognizable as Mallyan Spout. It was found in ‘a precipitous ravine ... [where] large masses of rock ... form many irregular cascades, and add much to the interest of the scene, though they present formidable obstacles to those who wish to explore it ... the approach to this singular place is rather difficult, there being no regular road’ (Belcher, 1836, p. 44). The way to Thomason Foss was, and remains, no less difficult. ‘Half wearied with his scrambles, the adventurous searcher for the picturesque seats himself on some moss-grown stone to rest awhile and contemplate’, before continuing on the way to ‘Thomason Foss, a water-fall of singular romantic character’ (Belcher, 1836, pp.45-46). The plate that

illustrates this passage in the book shows Thomason Foss with a group comprising three gentlemen and three ladies enjoying a picnic on the rocks in front of the fall. Even with the help of servants, a picnic excursion such as this would have been a daunting expedition. For the women their voluminous skirts and full sleeves would have been a serious hindrance when negotiating ‘the deep tangled path-way ... a confusion of underwood overhung by large trees, and the stream brawling along beneath them’ (Belcher, 1836, p.45). By mid-century, waterfalls were among the publicized tourist attractions in the country around Whitby, an ancient coastal town that was now developing as a seaside resort. Guidebooks described walks and rides to local beauty spots, including Cock Mill, and Rigg Mill with their little waterfalls, and Falling Foss, a more impressive fall further away from the town. They also recommended rail excursions to the Goathland waterfalls, mentioning by name Mallyan Spout, Thomason Foss, Nelly Ayre Foss, Goathland Mill Foss, and Walk Mill Foss (Reed, 1857; Robinson, 1860).

The advent of the railway and the tourism that it stimulated made a lasting impact on Goathland, which grew into a substantial village with accommodation for tourists, including several hotels. In 1890 a golf course was established, but, while this has now gone, the present village is still very much a Victorian creation (North York Moors National Park, 1997). Today it is largely Goathland’s role as the fictional Aidensfield in the Yorkshire Television’s drama series, ‘Heartbeat’, rather than its modest waterfalls, that brings car- and bus-loads of visitors to the village, but, unlike in many places, the railway remains important to tourism here (Mordue , 1998, 1999). Competition from motor transport and new policies on railways that were closing unprofitable lines in the 1960s, inevitably threatened the Whitby-Pickering service.

When British Railways closed the line in 1965, however, it was soon taken over by the North York Moors Historical Railway Trust. Since 1973 it has been operated as a private line between Pickering and Grosmont, catering mainly for tourists. It is an attraction in its own right and an alternative means of transport to parts of the North York Moors National Park, including Goathland. Like the original company in 1836, the North York Moors Railway (NYMR) still promotes itself as a way to enjoy ‘outstanding scenery with sweeping moorland, woodlands and waterfalls’ (NYMR, 2000a, p.9). The 2000 timetable and information pamphlet includes a photograph of Thomason Foss with a glimpse of a railway viaduct in the background (NYMR 2000b). Interestingly, this waterfall is not mentioned in the National Park Authority’s guide, *Walks around Goathland*, which gives much prominence to Mallyan Spout, a rather exaggerated impression of this slender cascade being featured in the cover illustration (North York Moors National Park 1997).

Despite over a century and a half of existence as a tourist centre, Goathland has done little to develop its waterfall attractions, the most famous of which remain quite difficult to reach from the village. Even today, although the path from the Mallyan Spout Hotel to West Beck is generally good, with steps built on steep sections and wayside bench seats on which to rest, the final approach to the cascade is ‘a rocky scramble [which] should only be attempted by the sure footed’ (North York Moors National Park, 1997, p.18). The path to Thomason Foss has long been considered dangerous, the waterfall being described as ‘almost inaccessible’ by one writer (Horne, 1977; Ramsden, 1965, p.30.). Apart from the steps and seats on the way to Mallyan Spout, and a few direction signs, the paths to the Goathland waterfalls appear to have changed little since the railway first brought tourists to the area.

Ingleton waterfalls

The impact of the railway and tourism on the waterfalls at Ingleton, however, has been much more marked. This area, with its caves and cascading rivers, was known to enthusiastic lovers of romantic scenery in the eighteenth century (West, 1784), but according to some, 'The story of Ingleton as a tourist centre begins in 1849, when the railway was brought from Skipton' (Hartley & Ingilby, 1963, p.131). This connection, made by the Midland Railway Company, and a later line built by the London and Northwestern, gave much greater access to the village, which for a time had two separate stations, one for each company. There was now a reliable, swift and relatively cheap means of travel from towns and cities, including the nearby industrial areas of Yorkshire and Lancashire from which day excursions became possible. Getting to the local attractions remained difficult, however.

One Victorian guidebook writer vividly described the difficulties and dangers encountered by the early visitors to the Ingleton waterfalls:

... the author remembers penetrating Swilla Bottom from Broadwood up to Pecca Falls, and thence to Thornton Force, and meeting with such obstructions of rock, and water, and hanging forest, as well-nigh baffled progress. In some places it was necessary to swing from tree to tree, and spring with the utmost caution on to projecting bosses of rock, lest a false step should have launched him into some yawning watery gulf, deep below. Not long after this the register of fatal accidents began (Speight, 1892, p.224) .

The influx of tourists gave a strong commercial incentive to improve access from the village to local beauty spots, particularly the waterfalls which, though nearby, were difficult to reach.. In 1884-5, the Ingleton Improvement Committee was formed to redress this problem by providing safe and convenient access to the falls in their wooded ravines, 'laying paths and constructing bridges for their safe and easy exploration'. By the 1890s, it could be claimed, 'Happily now such improvements have been made that the two glens are accessible to even infirm pedestrians, - the wielder of the crutch may safely venture – and the scenery of them both, which involves a walk of some four or five miles, viewed with ease and composure in the course of a summer afternoon (Speight, 1892, p.224).

An *Official Guide*, published by the Ingleton Advertising Association in the 1930s, gives a detailed description of the walk along 'the well-defined path ... made some 49 years ago', with its 'many seats', 'series of steps and platforms', bridges and places where refreshments could be purchased. The *Guide* stressed 'that the whole of the scenery in the glens can be visited without the slightest danger, the footpaths being ample in width. Of course, there are places where people can get into dangerous positions if they try, but if visitors only keep to the footpaths, they are perfectly safe. The bridges are substantial structures' (Official Guide, no date, p.22). For the enjoyment of these facilities a fee was charged, originally a payment being required at the entrance of each of the two valleys when they were in separate ownership. It was a situation that encouraged aggressive competition. One unfortunate result of the commercialization of Ingleton's waterfalls attractions was a rash of advertisements which disfigured the approaches. Speight (1892, p.226) wrote of 'Broad Wood, an

extensive verdant expanse, spoiled, unfortunately, by huge placards, through which the path proceeds a short distance to the ticket box'. Things improved after both attractions fell into common ownership, though, in the opinion of one Edwardian guidebook author, the signage remained of poor quality: 'The approaches to these two gems of scenery were formerly rendered unsightly by the vulgar and huge hoardings. These have happily been removed. Still, what directions there are up and down the glens are very clumsy and unkempt' (Baddeley, 1906, p.126).

'PARK AND WALK ... TO THE FALLS'

Thirty years later, Ingleton was showing obvious signs of the most significant development in tourist transport since the advent of railways. There were now garages to serve the increasing number of motor cars and coaches that brought visitors to the area. Competition between road and rail transport is symbolized in the 1930s *Official Guide*, on one page of which there is an advertisement for LMSR trains serving Ingleton, with an offer of 'various cheap travel facilities' during 'the Season'. On the same page is an advertisement for the Imperial Garage which stocked petrol, oils, tyres and accessories, and offered 'Private Cars and Buses for Hire' (*Official Guide*, c.1936, p.28). Other advertisements offered accommodation for motorists and cyclists, one hotel announcing, 'Motor Coach Parties on Tour Specially Solicited' (p.4). Among the latest facilities with which the Ingleton guide tempted the modern tourist was a riverside swimming pool with mixed bathing. There was also a cinema where, 'After seeing Outside Views', such as the nearby waterfalls, visitors could enjoy 'talkies', a good way to pass the time on wet days (p.26).

The site of the old Midland Railway station is now occupied by a car park, but Ingleton, like Goathland, is still served by trains that attract tourists. Threatened with closure, like so many rural railways, the line was reprieved in 1989, and the Settle-Carlisle railway survives to delight enthusiasts, and serve Pennine walkers who prefer not to rely on motor vehicles (Sellers, 1992). For most visitors, however, the way to the falls starts with a journey by road, usually in a private car. Hence, walkers' guides normally start their descriptions of walks to waterfalls at the nearest suitable parking spot. Mary Welsh, author of many books on waterfall walks in the north of England, writes on the assumption that her readers usually drive to the areas in which the falls are found, going to see them on foot after parking their car in some convenient place. Most of her chapters start with car parking advice, the first word of the opening sentence commonly being 'Park'. For one Yorkshire excursion the author suggests two possible starts:

Park and walk to the Lower Falls ... or drive over the Rawthey Bridge and follow the signpost directions for Uldale ... A mile along the road take the first right turn that leads over the moor and park at the gated end of the road (Welsh, 1990, p.27).

Many of the more popular waterfalls are provided with car parks as well as other amenities such as toilets. From the parked car the way to the falls can vary from rough and ill-defined paths worn by visitors' feet on the bare ground or rock, to well-constructed footpaths surfaced with asphalt or concrete and provided with sturdy handrails. Flights of steps and bridges give safe access to some of the more spectacular viewpoints. In her description of Ingleton's Waterfalls Walk, Welsh

(1990, pp.119-125) refers to ‘the large car park’, the entrance ticket bearing ‘a small map showing the route’, ‘a reinforced path’, ‘a metalled track’, several kissing gates and footbridges, flights of ‘concrete steps’, ‘a railed area’, and ‘a small refreshment hut’. There are also stretches of path which are ‘occasionally paved with natural outcrops of green slate’, others that are ‘leaf-strewn’. Part of the way is ‘a muddy farm track’, and the route crosses a lane formerly ‘an old Roman road coming from Ingleton’. Despite all the improvements made to facilitate visitor access to this scenic area, the seven kilometre Waterfalls Walk still requires considerable time and effort. In contrast, High Force, to see which Arthur Young happily endured such hardship, is today a comfortable ten minute walk from the entrance beside the good B class road from Middleton-in-Teesdale. Here is a bus stop and, just across the road, a large car park and picnic area adjacent to the High Force Hotel. Rebuilt after severe storm damage in 1992, the present reinforced footpath slopes gently to the Tees, the way wide enough for wheelchairs. Litter bins are provided, and the riverside stretch of the path is stoutly fenced, with brightly coloured life-buoys hung at intervals along the way. The edge of the plunge pool at the foot of the fall is reached by a flight of stone steps. There, affixed to the wooden hand-rail, is a prominent triangular sign warning visitors that, ‘It is dangerous to enter the water at any time’, near which hangs one of the life-buoys.

CHANGING WAYS; CHANGING EXPERIENCES

The present footpath at High Force, as reconstructed in 1992, is a recent example of a type of pedestrian way that, in Britain started to come into existence mainly since about 1700. Recreational paths have much earlier origins, of course, being laid out in the pleasure grounds of the leisured wealthy classes from ancient times. From time

immemorial, too, people have used field paths, woodland ways and other tracks for recreational walks, but footpaths made specifically to provide convenient public access to places of scenic beauty are much more recent additions to the landscape. Until the eighteenth century, the British track and footpath system had developed over several millennia to serve a variety of purposes associated largely with work, as well as social, including religious, activities (Taylor, 1979). While this dense and complex network continued to exist and develop as people went about their daily rounds, new demands associated with recreation and tourism found new uses for the old ways, often encouraging their improvement and the opening of specifically designed new paths and carriageways. The Romantic vogue for picturesque and sublime landscapes led to the construction of paths to places of scenic beauty to which access was previously difficult, such as waterfalls, commonly hidden in rugged, thickly wooded terrain.

The example of the Ingleton Waterfall Walk, described earlier, illustrates the process well. Much of this popular circuit comprises tracks that were in use long before they were discovered by tourists. Crossing part of a Roman road, it includes farm and quarry tracks, as well as the long stretches of footpath built for the specific purpose of making accessible to visitors the scenic ravines and waterfalls of the Rivers Doe and Twiss. Inevitably, these developments brought about changes in the very landscape that attracted the tourists, thus changing the visitor's experience.

Clearly, the way to many British waterfalls is much easier and safer than it was a couple of centuries ago. Greater concern is being shown for visitors' comfort and safety, with evenly surfaced graded footpaths, stout fences and handrails, public

toilets, direction and warning signs, even lifesaving equipment now becoming features of the tourist landscape at waterfall attractions. At the Aysgarth Falls car park, near the bridge that Leland knew, there are toilets, a café and a Yorkshire Dales National Park information centre. Responding to the needs of the handicapped, better provision is being made for people with disabilities whose rights to physical access are now acknowledged in land use planning and design (Beatley, 1994). This is seen at High Force, with its wheelchair access, and at Aberdulais Falls in Wales, where the National Trust has installed special lifts to a viewing area in the power station (National Trust, 2000). Another twentieth century innovation is the long distance footpath. The first of these, the Pennine Way, is notable for the many waterfalls that can be seen on or very close to the route. While British long distance footpaths comprise mainly existing paths and tracks along which public right of way has been established, many improvements have been made for the benefit of walkers, the construction of footbridges and the provision of direction signs, for example. Moreover, the huge increase in the use of these and other paths has led to greater damage to them, often requiring considerable maintenance work, sometimes involving resurfacing of the old track with more resistant material.

For many, these developments have enhanced the recreational experience, improving safety and comfort and, for some, making the visit possible where previously access would have been denied. Inevitably, however, the aesthetic experience is changed, many would say marred, by the introduction of new features into the landscape - the paths and associated amenities discussed in this paper. Easier access, too, usually leads to more visitors and, often, crowded footpaths and vantage points. Among the environmental problems that this commonly brings to popular waterfalls and their

approaches are soil erosion, damage to plants and disturbance of habitats, litter, graffiti and various other forms of visual and noise pollution.

At the regional scale, landscape planners and managers may be able to respond to this challenge by making provision for a wide variety of waterfall experiences. These might range from the remote, wild fall, untouched by 'improvements', and accessible only with considerable effort, to the developed beauty spot, designed to attract and cater for crowds of visitors of all kinds. At the local scale, particularly at popular waterfall attractions, the design challenge is to provide appropriate amenities where these are considered desirable, at the same time preserving the experience of nature that lovers of landscape seek.

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ILLUSTRATIONS

Illustrations for 'Wild Ways and Paths of Pleasure...' may be selected from the following 35mm transparencies:

High Force (HF)

1. The car park beside the High Force Hotel, with the road from Middleton-in-Teesdale in the foreground.
2. The graded path to High Force. On the left are litter bins. On the right a notice describes the devastation caused by the storm of 2 January, 1992 which severely damaged the earlier footpath to the falls.
3. High Force from the foot of the final steps. Note the handrail, warning sign and lifebuoy.
4. High Force, on the River Tees, a tourist attraction since the eighteenth century.
5. Returning from High Force, visitors approach the High Force Hotel, seen in the distance. On the right of the footpath, beyond the bend, is one of the many litter bins.

Mallyan Spout (MS)

1. Near the start of the footpath to Mallyan Spout, Goathland.
2. Steps on the path to Mallyan Spout. Note the bench seat at the top.
3. Steps on the path to Mallyan Spout. Note the bench seat at the bottom..
4. Nearing Mallyan Spout, the footpath reaches West Beck, beside which visitors enjoy a picnic. Note the bench seat, the fingerpost and the area eroded by walkers.
5. The last part of the path to Mallyan Spout is over tumbled rocks beside West Beck.
6. Visitors scramble over rocks beside West Beck as they approach Mallyan Spout.

7. Mallyan Spout, the best known of several charming waterfalls near Goathland.
The footpath continues past the foot of the fall. The attractive river, woodland and moorland scenery of the district contributed to Goathland's development as a tourist centre in the nineteenth century.

Thomason Foss (TF)

1. Thomason Foss, near Beck Hole, Goathland, from an illustration in Belcher's book promoting the Whitby and Pickering Railway (1836). Note the elegantly dressed ladies and gentlemen enjoying a picnic beside the waterfall.
2. On the way to Thomason Foss a dangerous stretch of the old path is fenced off.
3. A fallen tree lies across the path to Thomason Foss.
4. A litter strewn picnic site at Thomason Foss.
5. Thomason Foss, formerly one of Goathland's best known waterfall attractions, is now considered inaccessible to most visitors because of the dangerous state of the footpath.