



PHOTOS: TOM CRITCHELL

## FACT FILE RIVER URE & OUSE

**LENGTH** Combined length of the Ure and Ouse is 101 miles (Ure 46 miles, Ouse 55).  
**SOURCE** The source of the Ure is Ure Head, Abbotside Common, North Yorkshire. The Ure becomes the Ouse at Swale Nab, Linton on Ouse, north-west of York.  
**SOURCE HEIGHT** Ure: 2100ft (640m) above sea level. Ouse: 30ft (9m) above sea level (at the point where the Ure becomes the Ouse).  
**MOUTH** Humber Estuary.  
**TRIBUTARIES** Aire, Derwent, Don, Foss, Nidd, Rother, Skell, Swale.



IN ASSOCIATION  
WITH:

NENE OVERLAND

YOUR ONE STOP SHOP FOR VEHICLES, SERVICE,  
EXPEDITION PREPARATION AND EQUIPMENT

TEL: 01733 380687



www.neneoverland.co.uk

# HERRIOT COUNTRY

**John Pearson and Neil Watterson drive more than 41 miles of fantastic greenlanes through some of Yorkshire's most spectacular scenery**



**W**e're driving a Yorkshire Dales track, with stunning views in all directions. The lane crosses a bridge and then exits through a farmyard that could be straight from the TV vet series All Creatures Great and Small. It's easy to create a mental image of Christopher Timothy playing James Herriot being welcomed by the farmer. 'Mornin' vitinary, I've got trouble wi' me bullocks...'

We're in the Yorkshire Dales, driving some of the UK's finest greenlanes. This is where the BBC filmed many outdoor scenes for the series that ran from the '70s to the '90s, even though the real 'James Herriot' – Alf Wight – was based in Thirsk, a few miles east.

We always enjoy going greenlaning for this series of Rivers, but we were especially looking forward to this one because we've driven several of these lanes before and know how good they are. They're probably the finest collection of lanes so far in this series: this is greenlaning at its best and we're mighty thrilled to be here.

As always, we're heading from the mouth of the river to its source, taking in the best greenlanes on the way. We're following two rivers – Ouse and Ure – but they're really the same thing, the Ure becomes the Ouse at Linton, near York.



**Greenlane No 2: worth coming here for this enticing complex alone**

## GREENLANE #1

SE 636243

OS Landranger 105

Has a hand-operated level crossing at the start – it's stating the obvious, yes, but do check for trains before crossing. The lane itself is a flat field road, looping back to the village of Carlton.

★★★☆☆



## GREENLANE #2

SE 188780, OS Landranger 99

Gravel track network across Grewelthorpe Moor – very isolated, but beware of shoots in progress. ★★★☆☆

Ordnance Survey Mapping © Crown Copyright AM20/09



The mouth of the Ouse is east of the port of Goole, where it meets with the Trent to form the mighty Humber Estuary. It's quite flat around here, with Goole's dockyard cranes dominating the skyline and no greenlanes in the vicinity.

We try Bull Lane, a short farm track down to the river at Carlton, but the first significant greelane is near to the huge coal-fired Drax power station. This farm track is

### need to know

- Masham breweries: [blacksheepbrewery.com](http://blacksheepbrewery.com), [theakstons.co.uk](http://theakstons.co.uk)
- York tourism: [visityork.org](http://visityork.org)
- Camping, caravan sites and other accommodation: [informationbritain.co.uk](http://informationbritain.co.uk)
- Wensleydale cheese: [wensleydale.co.uk](http://wensleydale.co.uk)
- Local Land Rover enthusiasts: the Series II and 90/100 club has West and North Yorkshire branches, and members often organise greenlaning trips in the area. For more details, see [thelandroverclub.co.uk](http://thelandroverclub.co.uk).



Greenlane No 3: shallow ford marks the entrance to this lane, which climbs up on the valley side (below)

café on the A19 at nearby Cropley Hill. Then we're following the river – it's the Ure now – to the west side of the AIM, en route to the Yorkshire Dales National Park.

We divert into Ripon – another place with a wonderful cathedral – to dip the Defender's wheels in the river Skell, a Ure tributary, before heading for the vast network of lanes at Grewelthorpe Moor. The hillsides are bright purple with heather, and the grouse are keeping their heads down because the shooting season is in full swing when we visit.

The moorland tracks are mainly firm and well-maintained, good for all weather use. In parts there are mounds to direct water into the ditches, and these act as sleeping policemen, keeping speeds down. But the views are great on a clear day like this, and the sheer length of lanes up here makes them well worth driving.

A ford through a copse marks the start of our third big greenlane, Coal Road at Golliglith Foot. This passes farm buildings then

continues through a succession of gates into open moorland, along Golliglith Ridge. Here, too, the heather is a blaze of purple as we climb the mainly firm but not always smooth track, then drop to the bridge and farmyard mentioned at the beginning. There are more gates on the tarmac road out, which runs parallel to the lane across the other side of the valley.

Sitting on the banks of the Ure is Masham (pronounced Mass-ham, not Mash-ham), beer capital around these parts and gateway to Wensleydale. There's the long-established Theakston's brewery, source of the famed Old Peculier; and around the corner is the newer but very well



reached after passing through DIY level crossing gates over the railway line that supplies coal to Drax. The lane cuts between agricultural land, zig-zagging then turning sharp right to give us full view of the power station. Looming in the distance is its chimney, the UK's tallest at 850ft (259m) and 12 huge cooling towers.

Drax is the UK's biggest coal-fired power station, producing seven per cent of the country's electricity. Water from the Ouse plays a vital role in this process, being used for cooling purposes, then being cooled itself in the huge towers standing proud ahead of us before returning to the river. It's an impressive sight.

Given more time we'd follow the Ouse through the wonderful city of York, with its National Railway Museum and magnificent York Minster cathedral.

But the greenlanes are calling and the closest we get to York is when we stop for a bacon butty at the Big Chef

**NEIL'S MADE-UP FACTS ABOUT YORKSHIRE**

**#1** Ultravox star Midge Ure took his name after falling in the river during filming for a pop video.

**#2** The Viking name for York is Jorvic Jorvic – they thought it was so good, they named it twice.

**GREENLANE #3**

**SE 153810, OS Landranger 99** Starts off with a concrete ford then up along the valley side along Golliglith Ridge. Plenty of gates along the route.

★★★★☆



**Greenlane No 5**  
A narrow lane through  
even Scotland does not have  
this much heather. Further  
on, we encounter some  
ruined buildings (below)



respected Black Sheep Brewery. Both breweries offer tours, which are well worthwhile if you've time.

We savour a couple of pints of Black Sheep at our overnight halt, the White Horse in Middleham. This Dales town is famous for the ruined castle – Richard III's childhood home – and its racehorse training industry.

The beer's good and the hotel is comfy, but some of the walls are thin – as testified by photographer Tom, whose neighbours noisily enjoy one another's company into the early hours.

Next morning, we head through Leyburn towards Reeth, where we pick up yet another series of moorland tracks at Preston Moor. Soldiers are training on the military range to our right as we pass through a gate and splash through a stream crossing at the start of the lane.

The gravel and rock track slices through grouse moors, with more bright purple heather around us.

This is another lovely drive. Wensleydale in all its glory is to our left and the well-preserved medieval Bolton Castle comes into view in the far distance. The sun's shining and this is truly a grand place to be driving a Land Rover.

Some of the tarmac roads are great to drive as well, as we head through the heart of All Creatures country,

pausing to see the Ure splashing down over the Aysgarth Falls.

From here we cut back to West Witton, taking the narrow road to Melmerby, which climbs up a series of steep hairpins towards West Witton Moor. The next lane cuts off the outside of one of these hairpins, so watch out for traffic if you're driving it.

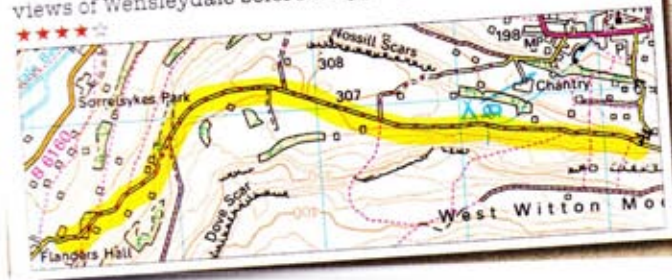
Initially, it's a little dull compared to some of the lanes we've already encountered on this trip, but it rises to four stars on the LRO greenlane rating as we drop down towards yet more magnificent Wensleydale scenery. We're in drystone wall country here; and you can't help marvelling at the tremendous amount of work that went into building the vast stone latticework that covers the countryside.

The lane widens as the views just get better and better: we all agree that this would make a brilliant spot for a family picnic.



## GREENLANE #5

**SE 062876, OS Landranger** Initially uninspiring, but not for long. The lane (pictured here) opens up to give great views of Wensleydale before dropping down into the valley.



## GREENLANE #4

**SE 080938, OS Landranger 99**

This lane, which runs across the heather-clad, wild expanse of Preston Moor, starts off with a small

ford before becoming a grouse moor track. The land is pockmarked with mine workings. ★★★★★





Now we're heading into familiar territory – towards the first lane that we use as part of LRO's Real World Test route. This is Busk Lane, which starts at Stalling Busk, south of Semer Water, Yorkshire's largest natural lake. We'd planned to enter towards Stake Allotments on the lane that passes through a farmyard at Carpley Green. But repairs on the single-track approach road thwart this, so we drive the first part of our normal

route then turn left on to Stake Road – eventually turning around to drive it backwards again.

Back past Semer Water, we climb the steep tarmac roads up to yet another familiar greenlane, Cam High Road. As you'd expect with an old Roman road, this tracks more or less straight from just south of Bainbridge to the top of a big hill

## GREENLANE CODE

There are those who would like to ban vehicle access to the countryside, so don't give them ammunition. Please follow these guidelines on every trip.

■ The status of rights of way changes over time. Only ever drive greenlanes that have known vehicle rights after studying the relevant Ordnance Survey map.

As well as that, you should check the definitive map with the county council, or get in touch with the local Land Rover club's rights of way officer or the GLASS (glass-uk.org) representative. Some definitive maps are now available online.

■ All the 'greenlanes' that are published in LRO are byways or unclassified county roads (UCRs). Vehicles are not allowed to drive on restricted byways, bridleways or footpaths.

■ Avoid badly rutted/sodden tracks. By driving them, you'll only make them worse and will slow their recovery.

■ Don't stray off the defined track. Doing so provides ammunition for those who want to ban us.

■ Keep under 12mph. Stop for walkers or horses (switch off your engine to avoid scaring the latter).

■ Travel in groups of no more than five vehicles, unless there's a maximum vehicle restriction. Some National Parks allow a maximum of four-vehicle convoys.

■ Don't damage trees or hedgerows, except for sympathetically cutting back any overhanging branches that could damage your vehicle. You're perfectly within your rights to do this, as lanes should be kept to a minimum width of three metres.

■ Take recovery gear/spade in case you get stuck. Charge your mobile phone fully.

■ Don't travel alone.

■ Leave open gates open – but closed ones should be closed again after you've passed through them.

■ Take your litter home.

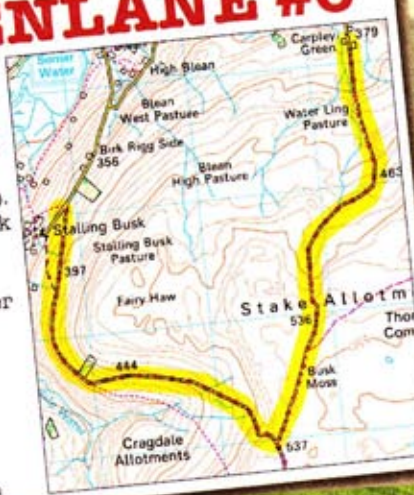
■ Supervise dogs and young children, especially when passing livestock.

■ Don't drive waterways unless you can be certain there's an obvious right of way across them. And **please take extreme care to check that the current isn't too strong** for your vehicle to cross safely. If in doubt, do not cross.

■ All the greenlanes driven by LRO are now rated out of five stars. The rating takes into consideration attractiveness of scenery, terrain, driveability and other interest.

### GREENLANE #6

SD 943871, OS Landranger 98  
 Damp, stony lane heading up on to the fells (pictured right). Joins with track heading down Raydale with good views over Semer Water.  
 ★★☆☆☆



Ordnance Survey Mapping  
 © Crown Copyright AM20/09



above Hawes. We're driving it in the reverse direction to normal – east to west – and find it's more technically interesting, with a number of rocky climbs. This lane is popular with walkers today, all enjoying the bright sunshine as much as we are.

Heading down the hill (which is great fun to ride down on a mountain bike, according to John) towards Hawes, we detour through the slippery ford at Gayle. We drive Bands Lane at Gayle, but this is a flat gravel track that certainly doesn't match up to the major lanes we've driven on this trip.

Hawes is busy, even though it's midweek. We stop at the Creamery for some Wensleydale cheese, and drive alongside the ever-narrowing

### NEIL'S MADE-UP FACTS ABOUT YORKSHIRE

**#3** Originally called Uredale, the valley was renamed Wensleydale to help draw in visitors after the (crackin') cheese was featured heavily in a Wallace and Gromit film.

## GREENLANE #7



Ure on the A684 and B6259 towards its source at Abbotside Common.

We're disappointed to find that a greenlane, shown on the map, is blocked by farmyard activity, so we have to call it a day and turn around to start the long drive south.

But what a great trip this has been. We've driven a total of 41.33 miles of greenlanes through some amazing countryside. 'Reet grand, vitinary. Reet grand,' as the ruddy-faced farmer in All Creatures Great and Small would tell James Herriot. **LRO**

