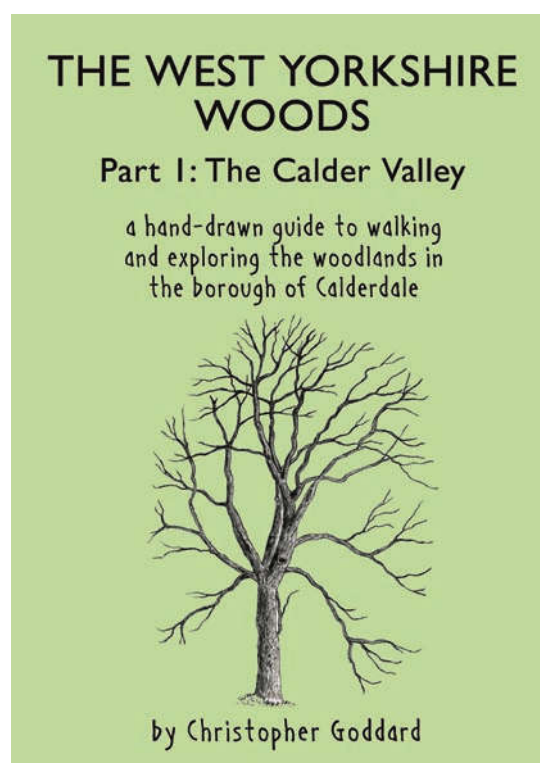


THE WEST YORKSHIRE WOODS: Part 1 – The Calder Valley



The West Yorkshire Woods: Part 1 is an original cartographic guide to the Calder Valley's woodlands. The book covers the rich variety of landscapes that lie between Norwood Green and Walsden, including Cragg Vale, Shibden Dale, Hardcastle Crag, and the Ryburn, Luddenden and Blackburn Valleys. From ancient oak woodlands and Victorian beech plantations to the recent rewilding of former industrial sites, the book traces the history of these woods and gives advice for exploring them today. There are extensive notes and sketches on wildlife, fungi, etymology and local history.

Over twenty suggested routes are included, offering new ways through old country, each with a focus on the woods and other landscapes defined by trees.

You may not immediately think of woodland when you think of West Yorkshire – indeed the county has only approximately 4% woodland cover, which is well below the national average. Yet there are many of its valleys where the rich woodland clinging to the steep slopes below the moors and developed hillsides forms one of the defining elements of the landscape. Often these are thin strips of woodland that barely show up on maps, but they have a striking visual impact.

For the purposes of *The West Yorkshire Woods: Part 1*, I have focused on the woods that line the River Calder and its tributaries between Brighouse and the county boundary beyond Todmorden. This is the borough now known as Calderdale, though I have occasionally gone over the borough border where it cuts off the head of Clifton Brook and Shibden Dale. The area contains several significant tributaries to the main river – Shibden Dale, Hebble Brook, Black Brook, the Ryburn Valley, Luddenden Dean, Cragg Vale, Hebden Dale, each following a similar landscape pattern. Large-scale industrial development along the streams has now either been converted into modern housing or industrial estates, or else abandoned to nature. A thick cloak of woodland then reaches up the steep valley sides and, where it levels out, fields, farms and older settlements take over, before finally the moorland wastes are reached. Although there is only 14km² of woodland in Calderdale, over half of it is considered ancient woodland in one form or another, meaning it has been continuously wooded since 1600. As well as water, wood was one of the great natural resources of the Upper Calder Valley – it was used for fuel (both as firewood and charcoal), and to build houses, furniture and machinery.

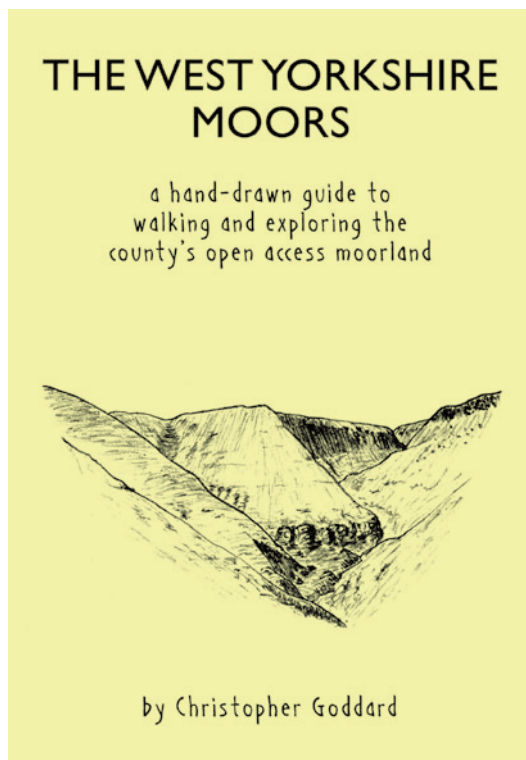
In this book, I have mapped nearly all of the woodlands in these valleys, as well as the often treeless areas in between. I hope to have captured the feel of these landscapes and the sense that, even in places with relatively little woodland, trees play a huge part in imbuing them with character. I decided to map the different trees with different

symbols to give a better impression of the character of each area. Although I have not plotted every single tree, it has still taken plenty of time to record the dominant tree types in every corner of woodland, as well as along green lanes or around old farmsteads. Oak, birch, beech and sycamore are the most predominant trees, and there are enough ash, chestnut, willow, lime, holly and conifers to justify their inclusion.

There are also 21 suggested routes in this book. These routes are not wooded throughout – this in itself would be rather dull – but provide as full an exploration of the Calder Valley’s wooded landscape as possible. You may at times think I am stretching the woodland point a little, but they remain lovely walks and it is partly the variety of landscape that makes them so appealing. The natural distribution of trees gives distinctive character and identity to different places and, the closer you look at them, the more this character will reveal itself. I began this book with a passing layman’s interest in trees and have finished it with a completely new outlook on the endless variety of these familiar and reassuring embodiments of nature.

To buy the book, visit **www.christophergoddard.net**

THE WEST YORKSHIRE MOORS



The West Yorkshire Moors is an original hand-drawn cartographic guide by Christopher Goddard to all of West Yorkshire's open access moorland, large parts of which were not until recently accessible to the walkers, fell-runners and antiquarians who wanted to explore them.

The book traces each of the paths and discovers the hidden features of these heights, unearthing the lost names and historical sites of even the most seemingly empty scene. In addition there are extensive notes and sketches on the area's wildlife, etymology and historical background. Suggested routes are provided, often far from the beaten track; each offers a new approach to these moors.

Think of West Yorkshire and you think of soot-blackened mills and grimy chimneys, and the moorlands whose dark features

they echo; peat groughs, burnt heather and rough grit. The two have always been linked, the one providing plentiful water for the other, the towns stretching as far up every watercourse as possible. For the people of West Yorkshire, the closeness of the moors has long been a chance to get out of the smoke and breathe fresh air. From towns across the South Pennines, you can walk straight up into the hills – it needn't be an expedition, a holiday, or a day off, the moors are always right there.

Though the days of the 'dark satanic mills' are gone, we're nostalgic for that very atmosphere in the crumbling mills and lonely moorland ruins of West Yorkshire today. We take to the moors in search of signs of this past, and so often when we get there it seems that we have the whole moor to ourselves. Yet upon our return we talk to other people and realise that they too wander the moors in the same spirit. But where were they? And whose feet have tramped such well-worn tracks across the hills? This is the enigma of the moors – the sense of isolation that pervades these apparently empty spaces, and yet the proximity of our fellow man, both past and present. There are ancient settlements, boundary markers, abandoned farmsteads and industrial ley-lines at every turn, while all the time the thrum of modernity rises to these heights – valley life, pylons, the M62.

The endless grey horizons that stretch away at the top of the roads across Cock Hill, Holme Moss or Windy Hill are all that some people want to see. Sit in the car for a few minutes, perhaps get out for a blast of chill wind, then drive on. The moors, though, are harder work than that; the more you give, the more they return. Sometimes you have to walk all day to appreciate them, to get a sense of what it was you came out here for. What I have tried to do with this book is provide more inspiration for exploring these moors and more ways of discovering their secrets.

To buy the book, visit www.christophergoddard.net