

## Ben Crick

Ben Crick grew up in Skipton. A talented musician, he studied at Leeds University and the Royal Northern College of Music. An established conductor, he is consultant at Harrogate International Festivals and artistic director of Skipton Building Society Camerata.

### What's your first Yorkshire memory?

As I was born here all my early memories are Yorkshire based. I remember being at Castle Hill, near Huddersfield, and watching people fly kites while I was still in a pram.

### What's your favourite part of the county and why?

It would have to be the Yorkshire Dales, particularly round Selside and Ingleton. I love a good fellside, cliffs to climb and potholes to go down and we are blessed in that bit of the county has some of the best opportunities in Europe for those sports.

### What's your idea of a perfect day, or perfect weekend, out in Yorkshire?

A morning's climbing then lunch with the family somewhere like the cafe at Anglesport. That would be followed by an afternoon at the Worth Valley Steam Railway (my five-year-old son loves a train, although there's still time for him to grow out of it). Afterwards we'd get a babysitter and my wife Hannah and I would go to the opera or hear an orchestra before supper at the Karachi in Bradford. Honestly, I've checked the mileage it's all just about doable in a day.

### Do you have a favourite walk – or view?

Park in Malham, then walk past Janet's Cross to Gordale Scar, scramble up the waterfall and then go on to Malham Tarn. Head down the dry valley, cross the limestone pavement at the top of Malham Cove and follow the path back down to the car. Just don't go on a bank holiday.

### Which Yorkshire sportsman, past or present, would you like to take for lunch?

Ian Holmes. He's still going so if you're reading Ian, I'm buying. I suspect a lot of readers won't know who he is but he's a fell runner who has been at the top of his sport for years. The commitment required to achieve this is incredible and to do this in a sport that has minimal material rewards shows an immense dedication that deserves a pint or two buying for it.

### Which Yorkshire stage or screen star, past or present, would you like to take or dinner?

Brian Blessed. Growing up I loved *Blackadder* and he was in the first series, also everyone loves *Flash Gordon* in which



DEEP THINKER: Ben Crick loves the Dales landscape, both above ground and subterranean.

he played Prince Vultan and if you haven't seen his version of *On Ilkley Moor Baht 'at* then do a search on YouTube immediately, it's brilliant. Also he's made a few decent stabs at getting up Everest, so we could also fill the time talking mountains. Add in the fact he's worked on recordings of music by Rimsky-Korsakov and Prokofiev and the night would fly by.

### If you had to name your Yorkshire hidden gem, what would it be?

So many of the caves and potholes in this county are truly spectacular and we have far less footfall than the summit of Everest. The bottom of Gaping Ghyll is fairly amazing.

### What do you think gives Yorkshire its unique identity?

People make places and there are plenty of things unique about a lot of Yorkshire people. I also think there is a lot of tolerance here. I've always loved opera, orchestras and rugby league and even as a kid at a normal comprehensive school nobody ever thought this strange and I've always been able just to get on with it. Perhaps that acceptance is one of the nicest elements of Yorkshire's uniqueness.

### Do you follow sport in the county, and if so, what?

Yep, the mighty Huddersfield Giants. I always wanted to be a rugby league player

but was never big enough. Actually that's just what I tell myself, but the truth is I was never good enough.

### Do you have a favourite restaurant or pub?

The Narrow Boat pub in Skipton; when I was starting out as a conductor I translated an early Mozart opera and they let me put it on in the pub. The event grabbed loads of attention and I've been drinking from their fine selection of ale ever since.

### Do you have a favourite food shop?

There's a fish and chip shop called The Fisherman in Settle where we used to stop off when I was a kid and I've started taking my family there now. It brings back a lot of happy memories, so I've a bit of a soft spot for that.

### Who is the Yorkshire person you most admire?

William Wilberforce, who led a lifetime of campaigning to abolish slavery. It was a campaign that suffered many setbacks, but he never gave up and it was finally secured days before his death. That's impressive and he has just pipped Jeremy Clarkson in my list!

### How do you think that Yorkshire has changed, for better or for worse, in the time that you have known it?

I think we are better at taking ourselves seriously; I work in the arts and over the last few years I have seen ever increasing standards and a region that's much better at shouting about what we do. As an example Harrogate International Festivals Sunday Series has a line-up of musicians that London's Wigmore Hall would be proud of.

### If a stranger to Yorkshire only had time to visit one place, where would it be?

Malham Cove. It's so spectacular that it would guarantee they'd never forget Yorkshire.

■ Harrogate International Festivals Sunday Series featuring headline act Emma Johnson begins on January 25. For full details go to <http://harrogateinternationalfestivals.com>

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