

Paul the Beaver



Saves York from
flooding!

All was calm at Paul the Beavers house. He was enjoying a lazy Monday morning reading the newspaper, with a cup of Yorkshire tea and Bourbon Beaver chocolate biscuits.



"What's this?" Paul exclaimed, "flooding in the City of York again!?"



Meanwhile in London, at 10 Downing Street, it wasn't so calm. The **Prime Minister** was pacing her office surrounded by her **advisers**, who were scratching their heads in deep thought.



"What are we going to do to help?" The **Prime Minister** said out loud.

"All those people are going to lose their homes and business unless we act fast."



"Ms Prime Minister "came a voice in the room.

The Prime Minister stopped pacing.

"Yes?" She said.

"I have an idea!!!", Said the youngest man, "I read they have reintroduced beavers back into the wild to help stop flooding.

There is a colony of beavers not far from York. We could ask Paul, the leader of the beaver colony, if they can help. He is a very clever beaver I read.

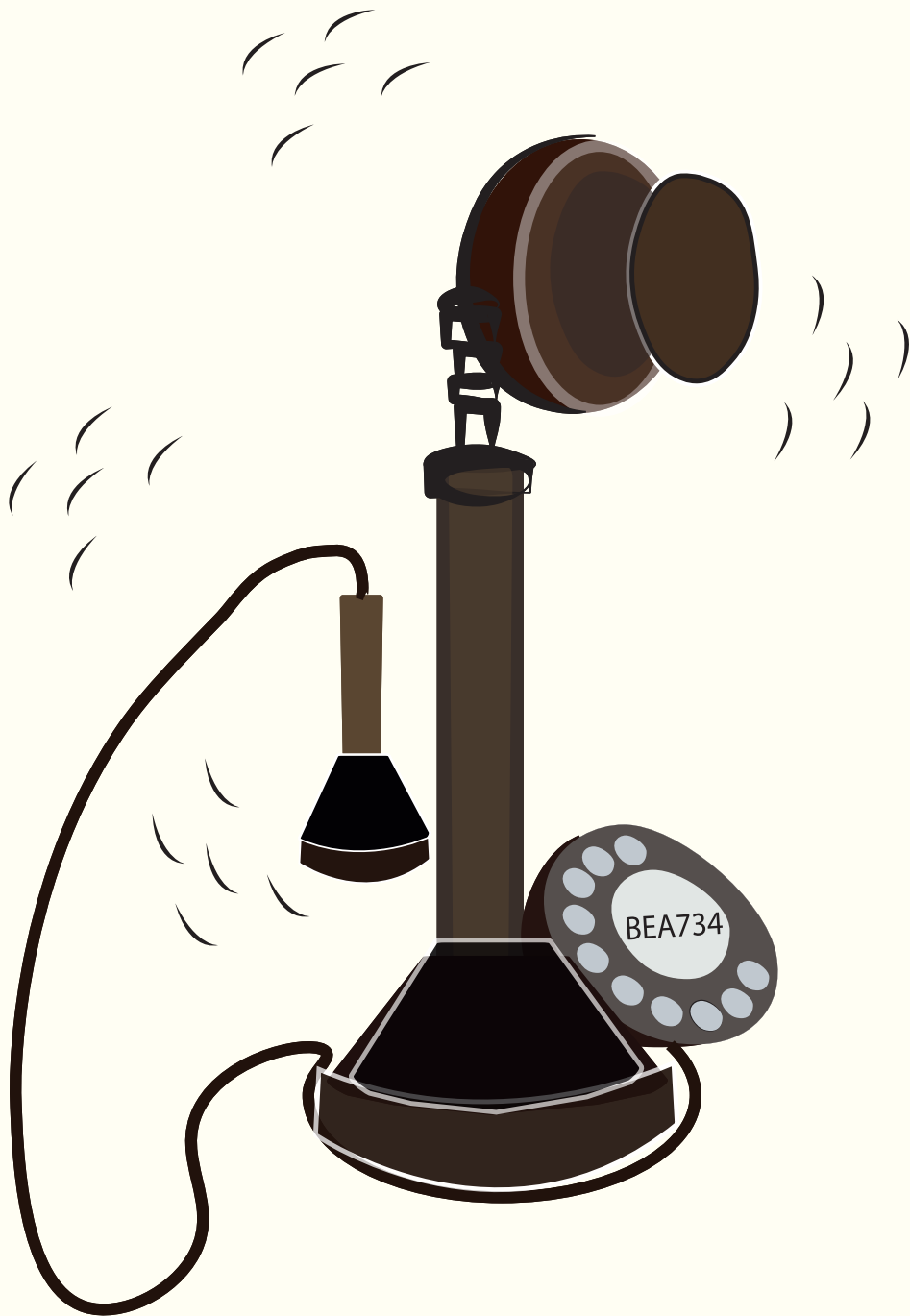
What do you think Ms Prime Minister?"



"How can the beavers help?" She asked.
"Beavers build **dams**" the man said.
"The **dams** don't stop the water flow, but they do slow it down. The downside is, the **flood water** has to go somewhere, so it will take planning and permission from the land owners."

Brrr...Ring, Brrr...Ring, Brrr...Ring

Paul the beaver looked sheepishly at the phone, he was so tempted not to pick it up, but he had



a funny feeling in his tummy
that this was an important call
(although it could be all those
cups of tea and biscuits swishing
in his belly).



"Hello Mr Beaver, this is the
Prime Minister", came the voice.
"Have you seen the news?"

Beaver Tea: Mint, Nettle leaves Tree-Sap (to sweeten)



Bourbon Beaver biscuits:
300g – Acorn Flour
140g – Sweet Tree Sap
6 x Dock Leaf Snot

York has flooded again!

The people of York are wadding out in wellie boots."

The flood water is already spilling in to homes and businesses", he continued.

"One of my team said you might be able to help?"

"No problem, Ms Prime Minister,





I'm happy to help. The kits and Mrs Beaver would like to help along with the rest of the colony". Paul was already planning in his head that they would need to travel north of the city. This was where the flood water was flowing from.

Paul the Beaver called a meeting with everybody, he talked them through the plan he had made.

He explained, "Once north of York we can build a series of small **dams** which will slow the water flow and prevent **flooding** now and in the future. How does that sound to you Ms **PM**?"

"Honestly Mr Beaver, that sounds like the start of a fantastic plan, we can't thank you enough."

"For this plan to work", said Paul,



"we need the permission from
the local landowners to send the
flood water on to their land,
(the flood water has to go somewhere)
and we don't want to be getting
into trouble do we?

Do you think you can do that
Ms PM?"



Inside the City Walls

"Yes, I think so Mr Beaver, my team and I will make those calls."

Paul was a very clever beaver,
and with the help of the colony,
the Prime Minister and her team
of advisors, using OS maps and
satellite imagery, they planned
where to build the dams with the
help and permission of the local
land owners.

Two teams of beavers swam from
their home in Cropton Forest
to the River Foss and the River
Ouse using the connecting rivers
and canal networks.



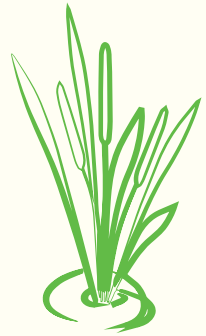
Working in their teams they gnawed **Aspen** and **Willow** trees with their teeth, teeth as sharp and as hard as any **man-made** material.



Willow



Aspen



Grasses

Using grasses and anything else useful that the beavering **water architects** could find, they built the **dams**.

This was great fun for the beavers,
they were in their element!



Meanwhile, the **PM** and her team had set up a mobile office in a bus which was parked close by, they were watched in awe. They couldn't believe the speed and efficiency that these **mammals** worked.



They used satellite images to observe the **flood water** in York slowing, then stopping, then moving back from the shops and houses.



Inside the city walls

The team breathed a sigh of relief as they realised they had done it!

With the help of the beaver colony, the emergency services



and with the permission of the local landowners they had all saved York from flooding now and in the future.

The story continues...

York City was saved!



Inside the City Walls

The beavers were held high as heroes by the people of York!

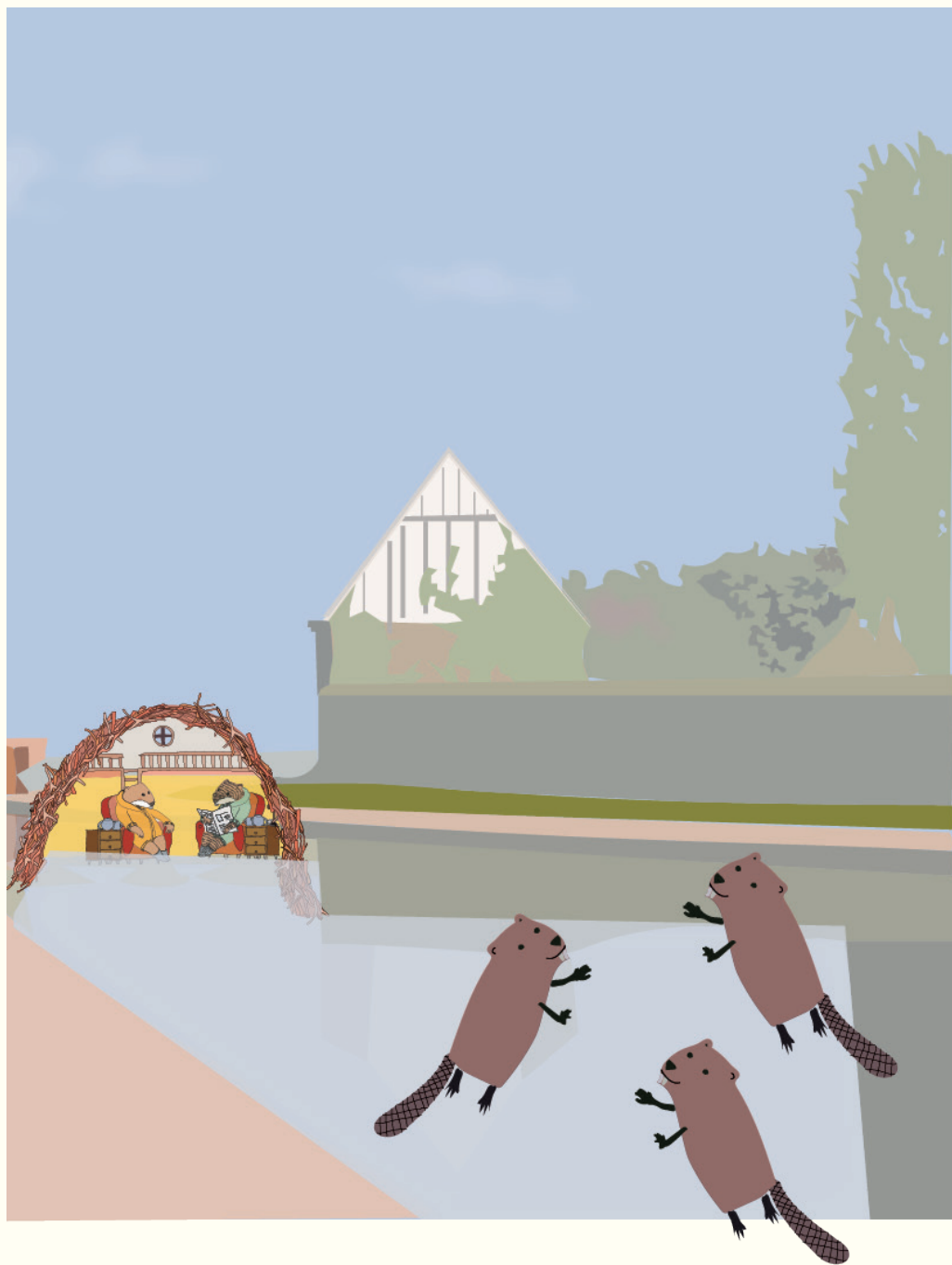
As a thank you, a huge party was held, the beaver colony were guests of honour.

The mayor of the City of York offered them permanently protected lodges and jobs as custodians of the rivers.



Of course the beavers said yes. Paul, along with his set, looked towards a bright future for themselves and future beaver generations.





The happy ending doesn't finish there...

The beavers brought with them animals, birds, fish and insects too.

Beavers have a special superpower:

they are an **ecosystem**, where they go, others follow, encouraging **biodiversity** is what a **keystone species** does.

Below are other **keystone species** and you can find out what their superpower is and other fun facts.



“The beaver isn’t just an animal:
it’s an ecosystem.”

ELK

Alces alces

A woodland forager and wetland grazer, the mighty elk is a major shaper of landscapes

EURASIAN BEAVER

Castor fiber

Naturea™s busy aquatic architect is a formidable tree feller, river changer and wetland creator

EURASIAN LYNX

Lynx lynx

A shy and elusive wild cat that plays a key role in the ecosystem as a top predator

WOLF

Canis lupus lupus

A vital top predator that can have a major impact on the landscape through

influencing the behaviour of herbivores

EUROPEAN BISON

Bison bonasus

Through grazing, foraging, wallowing and trampling, the hefty bison boosts habitat diversification

WILD BOAR (PIG)

Sus scrofa

This woodland rootler is a resilient churner of the Earth, breaker of bracken and habitat regenerator

WILD HORSE (PONY)

Equus ferus

Wild horses and ponies can play a leading role in re-wilding due to their selective grazing of tougher grasses

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your smart phone

<https://www.rewildingbritain.org.uk/explore-rewilding/reintroductions-key-species/rewilding-superstars?speciesType%5B%5D=77830>



Glossary of key words

Advisor: A person who gives advice in a particular field.

Architects: A person who designs buildings and in many cases also supervises their construction.

Aspen: A poplar tree with small rounded long-stalked leaves that tremble in the breeze.

Biodiversity: the variety of plant and animal life in the world or in a particular habitat, a high level of which is usually considered to be important and desirable.

Canal networks: Canal network definition: A canal is a long, narrow stretch of water that has been made for boats to travel along

Colony: A group of beavers is fittingly called a colony.

Custodians: A person who has responsibility for taking care of or protecting something.

Dams: A beaver dam is a dam made of logs and mud, built by a beaver. A dam is something that blocks or slows down the flow of water in a river or a stream.

Ecosystem: A biological community of interacting organisms and their physical environment.

Flood water: Water left by flooding

Flooding: The covering or submerging of normally dry land

with a large amount of water.

keystone species: A keystone species is an organism that helps define an entire ecosystem. Without its keystone species, the ecosystem would be dramatically different or cease to exist altogether.

Kits: Baby beavers are called kits.

Lodges: Beavers make two types of lodges: bank lodges and open-water lodges. Bank lodges consist of tunnels and holes in steep-sloped banks with sticks piled over them. The more complex free standing, open-water lodges are built over a platform of piled-up sticks.

Man-made: made or caused by human beings (as opposed to occurring or being made naturally).

Mammals: Extant mammals are divided into three subclasses based on reproductive techniques (monotremes, marsupials, and placentals) consisting of 27 orders. Within each order, families are organized by taxonomic relationship and distinguished by their genus and species

Mayor: An official elected nominal head of a city, town.

OS maps: The Ordnance Survey (OS) is the mapping

agency for Great Britain. It creates up-to-date paper and digital maps for individuals and businesses to use.

Prime Minister: The head of an elected government; the principal minister of a sovereign or state

PM: The PM is an abbreviation for Prime Minister.

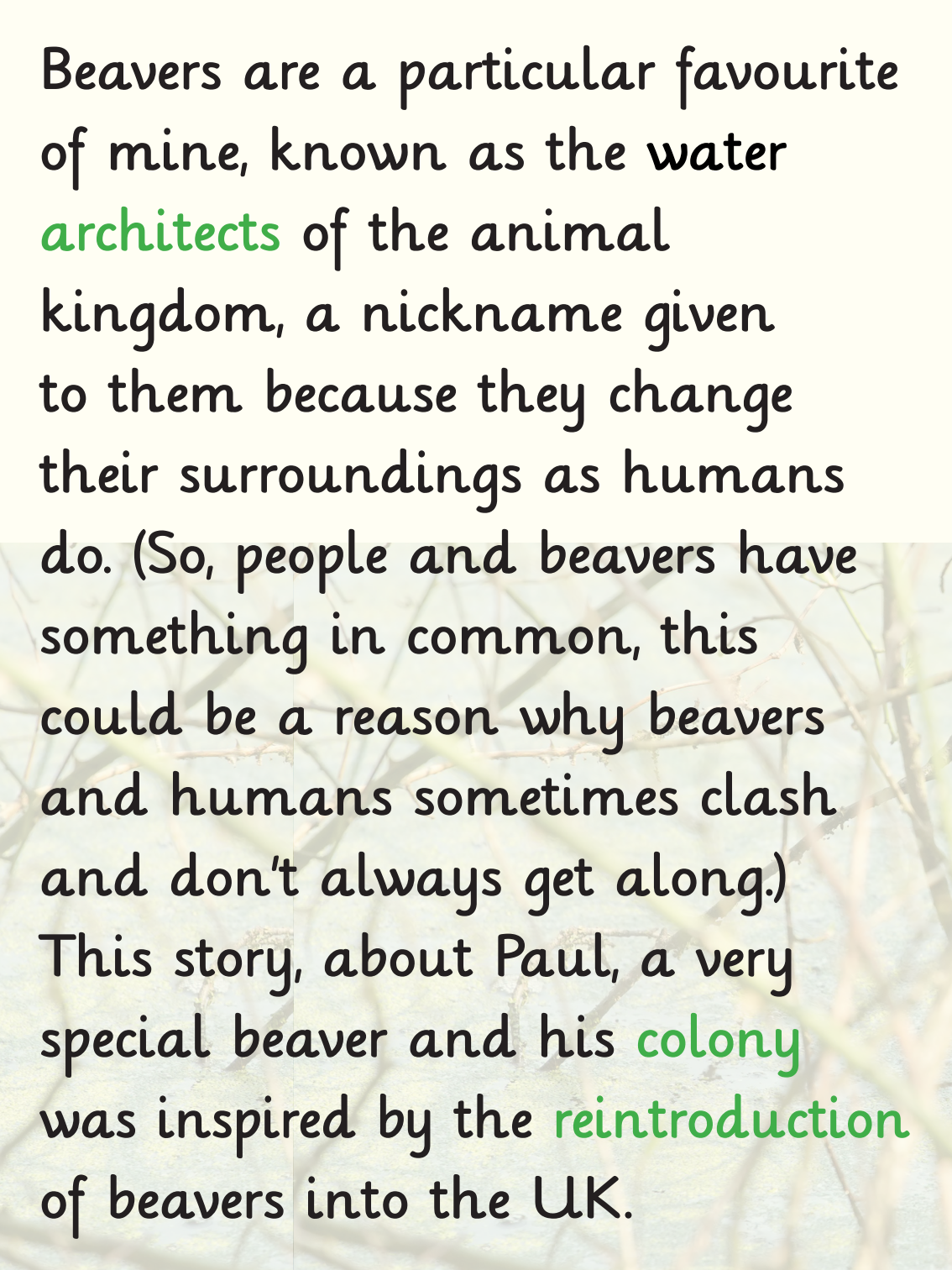
Reintroduction: The action of putting a species of animal or plant back into a former habitat

Willow: Willows, also called salallows and osiers, from the genus *Salix*, are around 400 species of deciduous trees and shrubs, found primarily on moist soils

This story starts like many others, not with a hero, but with a regular fella. However, this regular fella is a little special in my book. His name is Paul, and he is a beaver. A beaver is a **keystone species**! "What's a **keystone species**?" I hear you ask. Beavers are a wonderful example of a **keystone species** because they encourage **biodiversity**, other animals, plants and all the little things in between. They are an **Ecosystem**!



“The beaver isn’t just an animal:
it’s an ecosystem.”

The background of the text is a soft-focus photograph of a beaver dam. The dam is constructed from a complex network of sticks and branches, creating a textured, woven appearance. It spans across a body of water, which is visible in the lower portion of the image. The water is calm, reflecting the light. The overall color palette is muted, with browns, greys, and soft blues, giving it a naturalistic and serene feel.

Beavers are a particular favourite of mine, known as the water **architects** of the animal kingdom, a nickname given to them because they change their surroundings as humans do. (So, people and beavers have something in common, this could be a reason why beavers and humans sometimes clash and don't always get along.) This story, about Paul, a very special beaver and his **colony** was inspired by the **reintroduction** of beavers into the UK.

A campaign to **re-wild** and
prevent flooding.

Also, my experiences paddling my
kayak with friends in Yorkshire.

Book Written and illustrated by Jayne Cunningham

Photo credit: Sam Oakes



Yorkshire enclosed beaver trial
Cropton Forest, Forestry England

This book was inspired by Paul Lister, canoe coach of Malton canoe club, who takes the time to maintain the river for all to enjoy.

Thank you so much to all those who love the outdoors & leave it better than they find it. X

Jayne & Bertie

Special thank you to Stuart who suffered my early morning starts on a weekend and kept me topped up with tea
Caz, Teejay, Olga, and all those who helped me edit and grammar and spell correct making this book possible.