

**Marie Hartley MBE** (29 September 1905 – 10 May 2006) was the author or co-author and illustrator of some 40 books on the social history of the [Yorkshire Dales](#). She was born into a prosperous family of wool merchants at Morley, near [Leeds](#). She attended [Leeds College of Art](#) and then the [Slade School](#) in London, where she specialised in wood engraving. On her return to [Yorkshire](#) she settled in the market town of [Wetherby](#). During the 1930s and 1940s she set up in partnership with a local writer, [Ella Pontefract](#), illustrating books on the Dales and Yorkshire. The two women published six books on Yorkshire life and customs before Pontefract died in 1945.[1] Subsequently, Marie Hartley was joined by Joan Ingilby. Marie Hartley spent 75 years gathering material which related to disappearing rural traditions of Yorkshire. The women travelled across the county collecting stories, written material and artefacts, all of which they brought back to the 17th-century cottage they shared at [Askrigg](#) in [Wensleydale](#). In the early 1970s they donated their collection to the former [North Riding of Yorkshire County Council](#). In 1979 this gift formed the basis of the collection now housed in the [Dales Countryside Museum](#) at [Hawes](#). [2]

Their masterpiece was *Life and Traditions in the Yorkshire Dales* (1968), although many rank *The Old Hand Knitters of the Dales* (1951) alongside it as a local history classic. The archive of their documents and photographs remains in the care of the [Yorkshire Archaeological Society](#), whose Silver Medal they won in 1993. Both were appointed [MBE](#) in 1997, and in 1999 received honorary degrees from the [Open University](#).