



<b>MILK</b>	Pasteurised cows milk
<b>RENNET</b>	Traditional animal rennet
<b>MADE BY</b>	Wensleydale Creamery
<b>REGION</b>	Hawes, North Yorkshire
<b>FLAVOUR &amp; TEXTURE</b>	Mild and milky, with a smooth, creamy texture that toes the line between dry and moist

Wensleydale was originally a seasonal cheese, made in farmhouses dotted around the dales (valleys) of North Yorkshire, especially those of Swale and Wensley. The rennet used was made locally from the vells of the cows, and called prezzur, directly descended from the French présure. According to Patrick Rance, when natural rennet was short, a black snail was sometimes substituted, which allegedly had the same effect.

Towards the end of the 1800s, a merchant named Edward Chapman, who had been buying, cheese of varying quality, decided to take control by buying the milk from the cheesemaking farmers and making the cheese himself. Farmers found it easier to sell liquid milk than make it into cheese and some might argue that the advent of this large creamery reduced the number of cheesemakers in the region. This is true, but in the years leading up to World War I as the industrial population of the north expanded, city dairymen were scouring the Dales for liquid milk. If Hawes and similar creameries hadn't started when they did they might not have been able to compete in the rush for milk and the area wouldn't have produced any cheese at all.

Hawes Creamery carried on producing cheese through the two World Wars, providing stability for the farmers as a regular milk customer, particularly valuable before the advent of the Milk Marketing Board in 1933. Hawes, was taken over by Dairy Crest after the demise of the Milk Marketing Board. Then tragedy struck in 1992 when Dairy Crest decided to close the creamery down and switch Wensleydale production to Longridge in Lancashire.

Wensleydale production in Lancashire is a dagger to the heart of any true Yorkshireman, but, more seriously, the closure of the creamery also threatened the local dairy farmers. The creamery managers, workers and local people got together and arranged to take over Hawes Creamery. The independent Hawes Creamery was set up in 1993 and has prospered ever since. Longridge Creamery, Dairy Crest closed down in 1994.

The Wensleydale Creamery is a larger producer than we are used to working with, but despite their size, they still make their own starters and buy from local Dales farmers. In addition, the recipe they make for us (cloth-bound, traditional rennet, less starter and matured warmer) is a terrific tasting cheese.

