

The DANBY GROUSE MOOR

— LARRY'S SHORT STORIES #238 —

Danby is a well-established grouse moor in northern England; this year, it was one of the few that didn't cancel most - or all - of its scheduled grouse shooting days, because of low grouse numbers. With good weather in the spring, most of the grouse moors plan to offer 15-20 shoot days between the opener on 12 August until the grouse population reaches the desired end of season numbers – generally in October or early November.

Grouse moors are referred to as two-day or three-day moors, based on how many days a shooting party could shoot there without experiencing the same drive twice. A three-day moor has more productive acres of grouse habitat, more lines of shooting butts, and of course, more grouse. Danby has 10,500 acres of well-managed

habitat and is considered

a three-day moor.

Because of lower grouse numbers this year, our three-day booking was reduced to two days.



My pair of 20 bore Purdeys with five brace of grouse.

Danby, part of the Dawnay Estate, has been in the same family since 1656. The Danby Castle dates back to the 1300s and they've been shooting grouse on these moors since 1869. That's a lot of history. Some of the landscape views from the high moors are spectacular. On a clear day, you can see the coast of the North Sea.

This part of northeast England is high rolling hills covered mostly with a knee-high brush called heather. This is where the grouse live. Managing the heather in a patchwork fashion – to provide the various stages of heather development — is key to the best habitat for grouse. This



Russell and I at a grouse butt on the Danby Moor. This is appropriate dress for grouse shooting. (Photo by Bob Rose)

management is accomplished by burning every year, rotating through each small patch every seven to ten years. Burning small patches is more difficult than burning in large patches and requires a much larger staff to control the fire once it's started – and ensure that it's completely put out.

There are only nine shooting butts on each drive at Danby; most of them are

made of stone and have been there for many years.

We shot five drives each day, stopping

for elevenses (11:00 snack break) after the second drive of each morning. Frankly, I am never satisfied with my shooting! My first day was 41 grouse for 125 shots and second was 62 for 181; not great, but a little above average for the line. Russell beat me in both the number of grouse and shooting percentage; congratulations to him!

"...I am never satisfied with my shooting!"



Larry Potterfield

The Danby Moor
Yorkshire Province
United Kingdom
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The grouse moor, in the foreground (up on the hill), contrasted with the agricultural valley below. It was a stunning view in late September, as the purple heather turned to a golden brown.