

Is this the most beautiful TV set in the world?

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This October Emmerdale celebrates its 50th Birthday and these images have been produced as part of the celebrations.

Hidden away in a corner of Yorkshire is one of the most perfect villages anyone could wish to live in. It has a storybook high street, an historic village church with a vintage village hall next to a well appointed children's playground. The village boasts a local garage and well stocked 'delicatessen'. Further up the road near the iconic red telephone box you'll find a welcoming B&B, a handy vets surgery, a beautician and of course a well frequented local pub serving excellent gourmet food.

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The cottages and houses built out of warm Yorkshire stone are laid out with mature gardens, rich in native species and framed by traditional dry stone walls.

On the outskirts of the village you'll find the local graveyard peacefully nestled in the Dales landscape. Rows of headstones carved with honest Yorkshire names like Sugden, Armstrong and Wilkes, mark the final resting place of the good folk of the village.

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Cross the beck over the old arched bridge and you come across the sun blessed cricket pitch, with its wooden pavilion. Alongside it, a couple more cottages with gardens drowning in blooms of roses and honeysuckle. A great spot to while away endless Summer afternoons listening to the twack of leather on willow or the babbling of the brook as it runs through the vale.

For the wilder of heart, up the road there's a local adventure centre which will get your adrenaline pumping as you go abseiling or white water kayaking. Tourism is huge in these parts so there's hardly a day goes by without someone booking in for an adventure holiday?

If nature is your thing and you're lucky you might have a visit from the Red Kites which soar overhead, or the deer which amble down the high street when it's not so busy.

This is without a doubt one of the most idyllic villages in Britain.

But it might surprise you to find out that for all its many attractions, it has a population of precisely ZERO. Even the graveyard is empty. And despite it feeling like people have been born, lived, loved and died in this village for centuries, it was all built 24 years ago.

Welcome to Emmerdale, an entire 11 acre 'village' created in 1998 as the permanent home for the ITV drama after the original Yorkshire village of Esholt became too busy to film in with fans visiting to try and spot their favourite

characters and locations.

The Village took a record breaking 20 weeks to create with a team of highly skilled builders working around the clock, 7 days a week to get ready for a move over Christmas, the only time Emmerdale stops filming for a couple of weeks.

This October Emmerdale celebrates its 50th Birthday and these images have been produced as part of the celebrations. They show the 'most beautiful television set in the world' nestled in the heart of the Yorkshire Dales. In the distance you can just make out the Leeds city skyline and, in the other direction, the majesty of Harewood House on whose land the Village sits.

And as the programme's 50th approaches with talk of a storm looming over the Village, the dramatic Yorkshire weather did its best to join in - as you can see on a drone shot captured perfectly above the Woolpack.

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Editors Notes:

Photography and Drone: Iconic Photography taken by local landscape photographer Lizzie Shepherd with drone VT/stills taken by Adam Cook from Rotor Aerial Photography to celebrate the occasion of Emmerdale's 50th Birthday.

Public Tours: 'Main Street' does get busy at weekends with Emmerdale village tours taking place on limited weekends throughout the year.

www.emmerdalevillagetour.co.uk

The Village facts and figures

In 1996, Yorkshire Television and Emmerdale applied to Leeds City Council for planning permission to construct the village exterior as a purpose-built closed set. A location had been selected and once planning permission was granted, a tenancy agreement was signed. This was to facilitate the increased production, and free the congestion and disruption to life in the real village of Esholt, where exterior scenes for Emmerdale were filmed for 22 years.

The village was constructed after strict consultation with conservation organisations.

A team of highly skilled builders worked around the clock, 7 days a week for 20 weeks, to complete the village. The village has its own supply of essentials, including its own electricity and water supply, phone lines, sanitation and high-tech security system. However it has no foundations, or permanent structure of any kind.

Some of the original buildings and features in the village were replicated from Esholt. For example, The Woolpack is built exactly as it originally looked in Esholt.

The Emmerdale village takes up more than 11 acres of Yorkshire Dales.

All of the buildings are classed as “temporary structures” and most are timber structures covered in limestone cladding.

Many of the properties are based on housing designs from the 1600’s and built in traditional Yorkshire and limestone.

Each of the properties in the village have their own chimney fitted with small smoke machines, which are controllable at the flick of a switch to give exterior authenticity.

The designers and builders have managed to make the village look effectively aged by using a few tricks. Houses were sprayed with yoghurt and manure to encourage lichen to grow quickly on the exteriors of the house and roofs. Steps leading up to houses were physically ground down to achieve a look of centuries of weathering. Ivy and other species were introduced at a manure state so as not to look freshly planted.

The village features half a mile of dry stonewalling.

500 tons of crushed limestone was needed to create a mile-long access road.

The village includes 900 square miles of turf, maintained by a full-time gardener. As the show films six weeks in advance, care is taken to make sure plants are in flower at the correct time. Bulbs are nurtured in greenhouses before planting outdoors to ensure this.

Real headstones were salvaged from an eighteenth-century East London graveyard when it was redeveloped, and used in the Emmerdale graveyard.

There are many graves of characters that have died in the show. They include Carl, Matthew, Max and Tom King, Jack, Jacob, Joe and Sarah Sugden, Chris and

Frank Tate and Henry Wilks. More recent graves include Gennie Walker, Robbie Lawson, Katie Sugden and Donna Windsor.

There are fictional gravestones of crew members who have previously worked on the show, but are still alive. They are Mike Long, the Designer of the Emmerdale village, and Timothy J Fee, the former Line Producer of Emmerdale.

The outdoor set includes a house built some way from the main village, which was simply put there for perspective. In the shots in which it appears, it makes the village look larger. In real life, the building is the base and the storeroom for the gardeners who tend to the village set.

Set away from the main village the buildings for Holdgate Farm, Pollard's Barn and the Dingle's house are the only real buildings on the set. They are over 160 years old and would have been part of a working farm on the Harewood Estate.

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