

# NORTH PENNINES

# NEWS

Autumn & Winter 2006/07

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**NORTH PENNINES**

Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty





Allendale © Countryside Agency/Charlie Hedley

## A letter from the Chairman

Dear Readers,

Welcome to the Autumn and Winter edition of North Pennines News, the magazine of the North Pennines AONB Partnership. There has been a huge amount going on in the North Pennines over the Summer, both through the work of the AONB Partnership and the many other organisations working to 'conserve and enhance' the special qualities of this glorious part of Northern England.



I am delighted to be able to announce that in July the AONB Partnership secured the area's UNESCO European and Global Geopark status for a further three years (page 3). This recognises the dedicated efforts of the AONB Staff Unit and many partner organisations to use the area's globally-renowned geological heritage as a driver for sustainable development.

The AONB Partnership's four festivals of events, highlighting the area's plants, geology, landscape and industrial heritage, have gone extremely well (page 7). The success of the festivals is thanks, in no small part, to the incredibly broad partnership of 50 organisations and individuals which came together under the AONB banner.

Hay Time, the AONB Partnership's hay meadow restoration project, has got off to a flying start (page 5) and Peatscapes has been awarded a £75,000 County Durham Environmental Trust grant to undertake a pilot peatland restoration project in Weardale (page 11).

All in all it has been a busy and successful period for the AONB Partnership and its Staff Unit. Working closely with other organisations, landowners, farmers and a variety of individuals who care deeply about the sustainability of the North Pennines is at the root of this progress - long may it continue!

Cllr Bob Pendlebury  
Chairman, North Pennines AONB Partnership

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Front cover image: Allendale Common above Swinhope © Countryside Agency/Charlie Hedley.

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# GEOPARK STATUS SECURED AGAIN

The North Pennines AONB's status as a UNESCO European and Global Geopark has been successfully revalidated after a three day assessment in July. The assessor, Sylvie Giraud from France, considered the work of the AONB Partnership and Staff Unit and its many partners in using geology as a tool for sustainable development to be exemplary within the European Geoparks Network.

Sylvie found out about and visited several projects and attractions, including Killhope, the North of England Lead Mining Museum and many aspects of the AONB Staff Unit's Rockworks geotourism, education and conservation project. She also saw how the wider work of the AONB Staff Unit and others contributed to Geopark objectives.

The Staff Unit's Teesdale Time Trail interpretation project, including work with Durham Wildlife Trust to renew Bowlees Visitor Centre was of particular interest. Other initiatives highlighted included: the Rock Detectives children's geology clubs hosted by three local organisations including East Cumbria Countryside Project; the Northern Rocks Festival of Geology and Landscape; geological interpretation, trails and education materials in development; and wider work to promote and develop nature-based tourism opportunities throughout the North Pennines. The Unit's contribution to the work of the European Geopark Network was also



Holwick - Chris Woodley-Stewart talks to the European Geopark Network about the Teesdale Time Trail

acknowledged in the final report on the assessment process.

AONB Officer and Geopark Manager Chris Woodley-Stewart said: "This is still early days for the Geopark status but there has already been a great deal of effort and new projects arising from it. Two other Geoparks have not had their UNESCO status renewed, so there is continuing pressure on the AONB Partnership to keep up the good work and to do even more".

The Staff Unit also hosted a meeting of the European Geoparks Network (EGN) in July, at Barnard Castle School. As well

as a busy agenda of Geopark business, the 50 delegates from 11 countries visited Upper Teesdale and Weardale. UNESCO Division of Ecology and Earth Sciences representative Margarete Patzak commented: "It was one of the most successful meetings the EGN has ever had. It brought the relationship between the EGN and UNESCO much closer thanks to the extremely positive spirit of cooperation and efficiency between the network members."

Elizabeth Pickett, Geodiversity Officer with the AONB Partnership Staff Unit, added: "There's a lot to learn from our Geopark partners and we are involved in a number of joint initiatives, such as collaborating on education resources and sharing expertise. This initiative includes the creation of a new education and interpretation facility at Harehope Quarry called a 'Georium', using designs from a French Geopark. Funded by the AONB Staff Unit, this enables children to investigate fossils and ancient environments in a fun and interesting way as part of a field visit to the quarry."



Ian Forbes, Manager of Killhope Lead Mining Museum, introduces the European Geopark Network to this award-winning Upper Weardale visitor attraction

To find out more about current and planned geology-related projects visit [www.northpennines.org.uk](http://www.northpennines.org.uk) or contact Elizabeth Pickett on 01388 528801

# CONSERVATION AWARD WINNERS

The winners of the annual North Pennines AONB Conservation Awards have been announced. The Conservation Awards are split into two categories: **Natural Environment** and **Building Design and Conservation**. Winners receive a framed certificate and a cash prize of £500 to continue their excellent work.

Cllr Bob Pendlebury, Chairman of the North Pennines AONB Partnership, said: "The standard of the 2005 Conservation Award entries was very high and it was an extremely difficult job to identify the two winners. There is a huge amount of imaginative work going on in the North Pennines AONB to conserve and enhance the area's natural beauty. The aim of the awards is to highlight these initiatives and to encourage others to think creatively about what they could also do to keep this place special."

## Natural Environment

The winner of the Natural Environment category is the Garrigill Shoot for habitat work carried out on Yad Moss, on the high moor between Teesdale and the South Tyne. The shooting syndicate, working with the farmer and the gamekeeper have blocked old drainage ditches to improve the blanket bog. They have also created new shallow areas along some of the streams, which have been colonised by a group of resident water voles.

Alan Kitching, spokesman for the syndicate and member of the Moorland Association, said: "It is fantastic that the work of the syndicate has been recognised with this award! We received a lot of support from English Nature, which helped us apply the right techniques. The prize money will allow us to do more work to help our water voles." He added: "The moorland management work we do



Alan Kitching collects the Conservation Award for Garrigill Shoot from Cllr Bob Pendlebury



David Nightingale receives ECCP's Conservation Award from Cllr Bob Pendlebury

helps wildlife while at the same time benefiting the interests of the syndicate."

Northumbrian Water received a Highly Commended Award in the Natural Environment category for their commitment to public access associated with the creation of new wetlands at Burnhope Reservoir, Wearhead.

## Building Design and Conservation

The winner of the Building Design and Conservation category is East Cumbria

Countryside Project (ECCP) for its sensitive renovation of the Nine Standards, on the high ridge above Kirkby Stephen in Cumbria. The Nine Standards are a much-loved feature in the landscape – the origins and purpose of which are lost in the mists of time.

David Nightingale, Acting Manager of ECCP, said: "We are delighted to win this award and the prize money will be put towards other conservation projects that we carry out. We would not have been able to do this work without the expertise of our champion stone waller Steve Allen and the Oxford Archeology Unit at Lancaster University who tried to unravel some of the mysteries of the stone cairns".

Two Highly Commended Awards were presented in the Building Design and Conservation category: Fawside for their renovation of Deneholme in Allendale; and David Livesey for the conversion of the Methodist chapel (Yew Tree Chapel) in Slaggyford.



Steve Allen at the newly restored Nine Standards © Barry Stacey/ECCP

The North Pennines AONB Conservation Awards is an annual initiative open to individuals, public bodies, businesses, charities and parish/community based groups (including Parish Councils). Projects for the 2006 Conservation Awards should have been completed during 2006 and the closing date for entries will be 31 March 2006. Anyone interested in submitting projects should contact the AONB Staff Unit on 01388 528801 (info@northpenninesaonb.org.uk). Visit [www.northpennines.org.uk](http://www.northpennines.org.uk) for more details

# HIGH TIME FOR HAY TIME

In May 2006 a three and a half year project called Hay Time started in the North Pennines. In the AONB the initiative aims to restore 200ha of upland hay meadows by harvesting seed from species rich meadows and spreading it on less rich sites. A sister project in the Yorkshire Dales National Park has similar targets.

“It has been a very busy first season,” says Hay Time Project Officer, John O’Reilly. “The first task was to match restoration sites with suitable seed sources. The season for surveying upland hay meadows, is a short one, lasting from late May to early July and so I was kept busy visiting and assessing 144 potential donor and restoration meadows on 36 farms. All matched donor and restoration sites are within the same dale and usually within two miles of each other.”

Using specially designed seed harvesting and spreading machinery hay meadow seed was harvested from eight meadows and spread on eight fields within six farms, covering over 26 hectares. The cost of the contractor to operate the machinery and the purchase of the seed from the donor site are both covered through agri-environment funding.



Harvesting at High Oustley © John O’Reilly/NPAP

A potential limiting factor is the scarcity of really species-rich meadows to use as seed sources. This winter John will be looking at developing a system for hand-collecting from species-rich road verges using volunteers. We are also planning a range of education, awareness raising and community involvement initiatives.

Hay Time – North Pennines is a collaboration between the North Pennines AONB Partnership and the Yorkshire Dales Millennium Trust. It is supported by The Tubney Charitable Trust, English

Nature & Defra via the Countdown 2010 Biodiversity Action Fund, the Countryside Agency and under the England Rural Development Programme by Defra and the European Agricultural Guidance and Guarantee Fund.

Contact John O’Reilly at the AONB Partnership Staff Unit on 01388 528801 ([john@northpenninesaonb.org.uk](mailto:john@northpenninesaonb.org.uk)) for further information on the Hay Time initiative in the North Pennines

# BOLLIHOPE EXCAVATIONS CONTINUE

*Rob Young and Jane Webster review the on-going archaeological excavations on Bollihope Common...*



The furnace site being excavated © Rob Young

“Previously, we have surveyed archaeological sites on Bollihope Common dating from the Iron Age to post-medieval periods, and we have

excavated one Iron Age/Romano-British farmstead and a related, un-enclosed, round house site.

Our work has developed into an integrated community archaeology project and this summer we finished excavating a Romano-British iron smelting site and a section of related enclosure wall. We recovered the base of the furnace and masses of bloomery slag, and we sampled the surrounding soil for ‘hammer scale’ - the flecks of metal from working the smelted iron. Its distribution should pinpoint iron working areas.

Finds from the furnace area include an iron knife, and second century AD Roman pottery. The other area of the excavation showed how the enclosure was built and its relationship to the round house

excavated last year. Finds included multi-coloured, Roman, bangle glass (probably from Scotland!) and pottery from cooking and storage vessels. We also excavated the pit in which the furnace’s charcoal fuel had been made.

Next year will see continued work on the enclosure. We would like to extend our thanks to everyone who supported the excavation and our walks and evening talks: Newcastle University (funding); Peter Fawcett and the Bollihope Estate; English Nature, Defra, and the Bollihope Common Graziers (excavation permission); the North Pennines AONB Partnership for continuing support; and Andrew and Sheila Newton, Ian Milne, Tom Gledhill and Chris Jones for help beyond the call of duty!”

Contact Rob or Jane on 01388 529400 ([websteryoung@bruge2.freeserve.co.uk](mailto:websteryoung@bruge2.freeserve.co.uk)) for more information

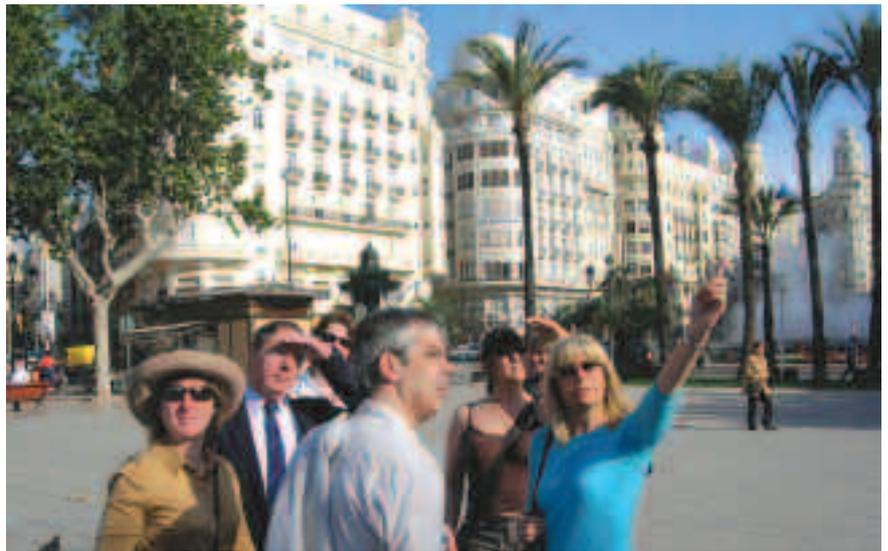
# NATURAL ENTREPRENEURS

Tourism professionals from the North Pennines AONB have benefited from a study tour to the Valencia Region of Spain to investigate different approaches to developing rural tourism. The businesses, from Teesdale, Weardale, the Allen Valleys and the Nent Valley, will be sharing the points they've learned with other people working in the tourism sector in the North Pennines.

"We were very impressed by the emphasis on quality in their accommodation which seems to be mainly self-catering," said Paul Huish who runs five holiday cottages on the Rock House Estate near Nenthead. "There has been a lot of public investment to help accommodation providers improve quality without losing rural charm."

"We visited the fantastic training facilities for the tourism industry in the City of Valencia," said Pam Forbes, Training Coordinator for the Know Your North Pennines programme. "Business and the tourism agencies work together to determine need and then deliver the necessary training," she added.

"The way in which tourism businesses in rural Spain work together to improve the tourism offer is very impressive," says Sue Mills who manages the Deneholme Centre in Allendale. "Much of what we saw has sparked ideas that we hope to put



*The group of North Pennine tourism businesses being guided around the city of Valencia*

into practice with the fledgling Allendale Tourism Network."

Assistant North Pennines AONB Officer, Peter Samsom, concludes: "We were pleased to offer this opportunity to tourism businesses in the AONB. The issues facing rural tourism in both areas are very similar and seeing a different approach can generate ideas that you

might not otherwise get when you are busy running a business."

Funding for the study tour came from the Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas (STiPA) programme – an initiative from the North Pennines AONB Partnership, funded by ONE NorthEast and TouriSME, an EU INTERREG IIIc programme.

If you would like to find out more please contact Peter Samsom at the AONB Partnership Staff Unit on 01388 528801 ([peter@northpenninesaonb.org.uk](mailto:peter@northpenninesaonb.org.uk))

## TOURISM TRAINING

A new round of the Know Your North Pennines (KYNP) training programme for people working in the tourism sector starts in October 2006. This innovative knowledge-based training scheme is an initiative of the Pennine Horizons cultural business cluster. KYNP is funded through the North Pennines AONB Partnership's Sustainable Development Fund and North Pennines LEADER+.

"The KYNP training programme has been developed by people working in tourism in the North Pennines," said Pru Kitching, Chairman of the Steering Group. "We developed a series of day courses on topics ranging from the well-known, such as lead mining and geology to the more hidden gems such as flower-rich hay meadows. Thanks to the high



*Prospective KYNP students find out about Moorhouse-Upper Teesdale National Nature Reserve with Martin Furness from English Nature © Ian Forbes*

quality of speakers, excellent course notes and ongoing feedback from participants the programme has developed into a powerful tool for our students."

David Heatherington, manager of the Weardale Museum, explained: "The

course equipped us to help our visitors make the most of their visit to the area. After all, it's the exciting mix of things to explore that makes the North Pennines such a great place to visit. The course also helped develop a network of contacts across the area and the training days became an opportunity to discuss other issues with colleagues."

The new KYNP programme will run over two years and will consist of five training days each winter. Training sessions usually take place on the second Wednesday of each month.

To see if there are any places left contact Pam Forbes, the Course Coordinator, on 01388 517365 ([pampeathill@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:pampeathill@tiscali.co.uk))

# FESTIVAL ROUND-UP

During 2006 the North Pennines AONB Partnership Staff Unit organised a series of four festivals of events and activities aimed at highlighting and promoting the area's special qualities:

- Northern Rocks - the North Pennines Festival of Geology and Landscape;
- Plants on High - the North Pennines Wild Plant Festival;
- The Roof of England Walks Festival in Blanchland;
- and the Geotours and Rockwalks Programme.

"The festivals included well over 100 individual events and activities," says Shane Harris, Sustainable Tourism and Communications Officer with the AONB Staff Unit. "From themed walks, guided minibus tours, mine trips and identification workshops to geological holidays, town strolls, illustrated talks and plant dye workshops – there was something for everyone."

All four festivals were run in close cooperation with 50 organisations and



Looking for fossils in Trout Beck © Shane Harris/NPAP

dedicated individual, including many volunteers. "We are in debt to the enthusiasm, drive, commitment and willingness to work together of so many individuals and numerous organisations," observes Chris Woodley-Stewart, North Pennines AONB Officer. "I would like to extend our thanks to everyone who pitched in – we couldn't have done it without you!"

## Comments from Northern Rocks participants:

*"This was top notch industrial, social history set in the context of the geological exploitation of the area."*

*"Fascinating insight into current geology"*

*"Enthusiasm of guides comes over very well. We appreciate the time and energy given to us and the sharing of their knowledge."*

## Comments from Plants on High attendees:

*"I can think of no way in which it could have been improved."*

*"I thought the leader was great – her passion and enthusiasm for her subject really made the day go with a zing."*

*"Fascinating event with an excellent leader – I think the Festival is a great idea."*

## Festival Fact File

- ✓ Over 2,000 people came on events to enjoy the landscapes, geology, plants and countryside of the North Pennines.
- ✓ 55% of Plants on High participants rated the festival as Excellent (27% Very Good, 18% Good)
- ✓ 98% of Northern Rocks participants rated their leader as Good, Very Good or Excellent (54% Excellent, 34% Very Good and 10% Good)
- ✓ 15% of Northern Rocks attendees said they stayed in visitor accommodation in the North Pennines
- ✓ Over 60% of Northern Rocks attendees spend money in the local economy
- ✓ Almost 90% of people coming on Plants on High events said they had learnt more about the special qualities of the AONB



On the way up to the Nine Standards © Shane Harris/NPAP

# SPOTLIGHT ON BLACK GROUSE

In England, black grouse are now only found in the Pennine Hills, with 80% of the population found within the North Pennines AONB. "Black grouse are an iconic bird of the AONB," says Chris Woodley-Stewart, North Pennines AONB Officer. "These distinctive birds thrive on the heather moorland fringe and the patchwork of rough grazing allotments and hay meadows," he continued.

They are a species of high conservation concern in the UK and are a 'Red List' species and a 'Priority Species' in the UK Government's Biodiversity Action Plan. National surveys estimate that black grouse have declined in the UK from approximately 25,000 displaying males in the early 1990s to 6,500 in 1995/6.

Repeat surveys in 2005 reported a continuing decline of 22% since 1995/6



Black Grouse © Laurie Campbell

with the UK population now estimated at just 5,000 males. The main decline (29%)

was recorded in Scotland which is home to 66% of the UK population.

## The North Pennines Black Grouse Recovery Project

The Recovery Project has been running since 1996 and was established to secure and increase the numbers and range of black grouse. The project is a partnership between the Game Conservancy Trust, English Nature, RSPB, Ministry of Defence, Northumbrian Water, the North Pennines AONB Partnership and the Sita Trust. The initiative is driven forward by a Project Officer - Phil Warren. Phil, who is based in Forest-in-Teesdale, has a varied role including providing free advice on

management for black grouse to landowners, farmers, conservation organisations and others. He also

monitors black grouse numbers and initiates research programmes.

In the North Pennines, Game Conservancy Trust research has shown that black grouse have high rates of adult survival (72%), which is the highest recorded by any studies on black grouse



in Europe. However, they breed less well here than in other areas. "Poor breeding is linked to poor weather in June," explains Phil. "A combination of wet weather, together with clutch predation by stoats and weasels and poor quality brood rearing habitats largely account for the low reproductive success found."

"The main management recommendations are to improve breeding habitat on the moor edge and adjacent rough pastures through reductions in grazing, small-scale planting of shrubby woodlands and encouragement of predator control," says Phil. "The restoration of moor fringe habitats through reduced grazing has proved very effective. Black grouse have bred more successfully resulting in a 5% per year increase in the numbers of males."

The Project has delivered on its primary objective to halt the decline of black grouse in northern England. Surveys in 1998 (789 males), 2002 (893 males) and 2006 (1029 males) have indicated overall stability in both range and numbers. This



Creation of open scrubby woodland in Upper Teesdale. Berry-bearing trees such as rowan, birch and hawthorn provide winter food and breeding habitat for black grouse © Phil Warren/GCT

success has been achieved by:

- Demonstrating that black grouse will respond positively to appropriate management;
- Delivering management advice to c75% of land within the bird's current range;
- Developing successful working partnerships with private and statutory

bodies to enable delivery of habitat enhancement;

- Influencing new agricultural, forestry and access policy to incorporate the needs of black grouse; and
- Raising the profile of black grouse and recognising their use as an indicator of high quality upland habitats.



Males gather at traditional 'lek' sites where they display to attract females © Laurie Campbell

## The Future

"The decline has been stemmed," says Phil. "But the population range is still small with 63% of the English population confined to just three North Pennine Dales; Teesdale, Weardale and South Tynedale."

"The long-term sustainability of black grouse in England is dependent on the consolidation and expansion of the current range," explains Phil. To achieve these objectives the project has entered an exciting new five-year funding phase in which the main objectives are to deliver the Biodiversity Action Plan targets to expand the range of black grouse in northern England.

The project has confirmed funding

### Find out more

Contact Phil Warren, Black Grouse Recovery Project Officer, on 01833 622208 (pwarren@gct.org.uk) or visit [www.gct.org.uk](http://www.gct.org.uk) and [www.blackgrouse.info](http://www.blackgrouse.info)

support from the existing partners. In addition, the North Pennines AONB Partnership has awarded a grant of £30,000 from their Sustainable Development Fund. Funding has also been provided by the Sita Trust. This additional support has enabled the project to employ an assistant, Kim Anderton whose help will be invaluable in moving the project forward.

"To increase population size we need to increase breeding success by both improving brood habitats and by rigorously controlling predators, particularly stoats on the moor fringe," says Phil. "Simultaneously, we must maintain the current high rates of adult survival. Game Conservancy Trust research has also found that females may disperse beyond the current range boundary where males do not occur. In contrast, males do not seem to disperse very far. The project will be testing whether the physical movement of males, to establish new breeding groups, will help black grouse to re-colonise areas."

## Black Grouse Fact File

- In Britain, black grouse were widespread during the latter half of the 19th century. By 1910 they were extinct in most southern counties, except for remnant populations on Exmoor and the Quantocks which survived into the 1960s.
- The wing beats of the black grouse give the impression of a slower flight than the red grouse. However, this is an illusion - black grouse fly considerably faster and usually higher.
- Black grouse are known as a woodland grouse. In the North Pennines, however, they live in a landscape with limited tree cover. Here they find food and live in a mosaic of habitats - moorlands, white grass moor, pastures, hay meadows and small areas of native shrubby woodland.
- Lek arenas are typically open areas with short vegetation, such as grassy patches within heather moorland or on hill pastures.
- 'Lek' is Norse for play.



© Laurie Campbell

- Nests are concealed in mature heather and rushes. Eggs are laid from late April to mid-June and the clutch size varies from 6 to 13 eggs. Incubation lasts between 25 and 27 days.
- The peak of hatching is mid-June but can vary regionally from an average date of June 17 in the Scottish Highlands to June 24 in the North Pennines.
- During their first few weeks chicks eat a wide variety of insects. They are self-feeding and are cared for by the female.

# CALL FOR SDF PROJECTS

The AONB Staff Unit is actively seeking applications for the 2007-2008 North Pennines AONB Sustainable Development Fund (SDF). "If you have a potential project which you think might be eligible for funding under our SDF a member of the Staff Unit would be more than happy to advise you," says Chris Woodley-Stewart, North Pennines AONB Officer.

Initiatives that are based within or benefit the North Pennines AONB, which aim to support environmental, social and economic prosperity could be eligible for funding of between £3,000 and £30,000. Suitable projects might include: appropriate renewable/green energy schemes; sustainable transport projects; innovative products or initiatives connected to land management; community youth schemes with an environmental or heritage aspect; nature, landscape or historic environment conservation activities; sustainable tourism projects, including infrastructure or product development; and projects which directly address actions in the AONB Management Plan.

So far the fund has provided £180,000 of support to 13 projects bringing benefits to the people, economy and environment in the North Pennines. Funding for the SDF has come from Defra, via the Countryside Agency.

Projects supported have included:

- Renewable energy and grey water treatment work at Langdon Beck Youth Hostel and sensitive development of Ninebanks Youth Hostel;
- Work to extend a tearoom at Holwick using traditional materials;
- Conservation and interpretation of Smallcleugh Mine at Nenthead;
- Developing visitor facilities at Geltsdale Nature Reserve;
- Expansion of the Know Your North Pennines training programme;
- the North Pennines Black Grouse Recovery Project; and
- the development of a North Pennines Sculpture Workshop at Eggleston.

The SDF complements the AONB Partnership's Small Grants Scheme, which since its launch in 2002 has supported over 100 projects aimed at caring for and celebrating the AONB.



Restoring Smallcleugh Mine Shop, a project funded by the SDF

A leaflet outlining both the SDF and the Small Grants Scheme is available. For more information please contact the AONB Staff Unit on 01388 528801 ([info@northpenninesaonb.org.uk](mailto:info@northpenninesaonb.org.uk)) or visit [www.northpennines.org.uk](http://www.northpennines.org.uk)

## HELPING HAND FOR LAPWINGS

In August 2006 the RSPB launched a five year initiative in the North Pennines AONB called the Lapwing Recovery Project. This research based initiative aims to establish how managing farmland under an agri-environment scheme, like the Higher Level Scheme, affects lapwing populations in the AONB. To do this, researchers will be surveying farms for five years comparing sites that are in an agri-environment scheme to sites which are not.

Gary Woodburn, the Lapwing Recovery Project Officer for the North Pennines, explains: "This is one of five similar RSPB projects running throughout the UK. To date most research on these birds has been carried out in lowland areas, so these new projects offer a valuable opportunity for us to understand more about what's happening with our upland lapwings."

The lapwing is generally fairing better in uplands than in the lowlands. This may be due to the more traditional farming methods practiced in the North Pennines. However the bird still seems to be declining in many upland areas, including parts of the North Pennines, which is why this project is so important.



Lapwing © Andy Hay [www.rspb-images.com](http://www.rspb-images.com)

"We will be relying heavily on the support of the local farming community to allow access and monitoring of lapwings on their land," says Gary. "I will be contacting farmers in the Baldersdale, Lunedale and Allendale areas over the winter period, to see if they would like to take part in the research. The lapwing recovery project intends to work closely with RSPB's existing Pastures for Plovers Project, offering a package of on-site advice and an agri-environment application service if required."

Contact Gary Woodburn for further information on 01434 684873 ([gary.woodburn@rspb.org.uk](mailto:gary.woodburn@rspb.org.uk))

# WOODWORKS

Northwoods, the organisation that supports tree and timber businesses in North East England, has accessed funding from one of the final rounds of Defra's Vocational Training Scheme to provide training aimed at improving the woodlands in the North East and rekindling the role that they play in the rural economy. The WoodWorks programme of courses is set to help landowners and managers to make the most of their woods.

Woodlands form a small but integral part of the landscape in the North Pennines. Traditionally, woodlands have provided farms and estates with many essential materials needed for the management of the farm, with heat, a refuge for stock and as a haven for wildlife and game birds.

Staff at Northwoods have identified a variety of training topics relevant to



woodland owners. They range from managing woodlands for wildlife and mobile sawmilling to non-timber woodland products such as game and mushrooms and marketing woodland products. Northwoods ran a series of

information sessions between August and October to spread the word and will now begin the delivery of tailored training sessions over the next two years.

Neil Harrison, Northwoods Director, said: "There is tremendous potential to develop a much more robust financial base for woodlands in the Region but sometimes landowners and managers don't fully recognise the potential. WoodWorks will give people the opportunity to improve their skills and allow them to make the most of what can be an undervalued resource."

For further information on WoodWorks and to get a programme visit [www.northwoods.org.uk](http://www.northwoods.org.uk) or contact Northwoods on 01669 621489

# GETTING A GRIP

In the last edition of North Pennines News the launch of the AONB Partnership's Peatscapes project was announced. "We have not wasted any time getting this important project off the ground," confirms Paul Leadbitter, Project Manager.

The project was initially supported by the Environment Agency, Natural England and Northumbrian Water. These existing funders have now been joined by the County Durham Environmental Trust (CDENT). CDENT is providing £75,000 of funding, which will enable the initiative to undertake a pilot peatland restoration project in Weardale.

The new funding will be used to block a series of grips on the Weardale moors. The restoration area is currently being negotiated with landowners and it is hoped that the work will begin this winter. The actual process involves strategically blocking key grips with dams that are usually made out of peat. This re-wetting is expected to have a variety of benefits including slowing water run-off, thus reducing erosion and flood severity.

"One of the key issues with peatlands is the practice of draining them in an



*A pool develops behind a peat dam in a former grip on Westernburnhope Moor © Paul Leadbitter/NPAP*

attempt to make the land more productive," says Paul. "Drainage ditches, or grips, are channels that were cut to try and dry out the peat. During the 20th century this practice became common. Increased flooding down stream, increases in water colouration, and decreasing diversity of both flora and fauna have been some of the consequences of draining peatlands."

Peatlands are a very important ecological asset which provide us with a host of 'green services' including: flood amelioration; water filtration i.e. reduced water colouration; keeping one of the key

greenhouse gases safely locked away (carbon); and providing habitats for a host of rare species. "Peat in a healthy (i.e. wet) condition is also important for archaeological and historical reasons, as keeping artefacts and remains waterlogged protects them," concludes Paul.

For more information contact Paul Leadbitter, Peatscapes Project Manager, on 01388 528801 ([paulpeatscapes@northpenninesaonb.org.uk](mailto:paulpeatscapes@northpenninesaonb.org.uk))

# BYWAY VULNERABILITY MAPPING

The AONB Partnership has been working with the Natural England partnership which has funded research into the environmental sustainability of recreational routes. The outcome of the work is a new methodology, which considers the vulnerability of routes based on issues such as nature conservation and the historic environment.

The AONB Partnership Staff Unit is hosting a student placement, applying the new vulnerability mapping methodology to the Byways Open to All Traffic (BOATs) and similar routes within the North Pennines. "The placement is going extremely well," says Simon Wilson, Area Co-ordinator East for the Staff Unit. "It is anticipated that the results will be used by Natural England to make recommendations on the appropriate level



*The Grasshill Causeway (Upper Weardale) is an Unclassified County Road and is one of the routes being surveyed © Countryside Agency/Charlie Hedley*

and types of access to the area's three Highway Authorities, which will help them to decide upon suitable management."

Simon continued: "We are fully aware of the emotive issues surrounding vehicles accessing the countryside. This

work will enable those involved in managing the network to make decisions using subjective evidence. Chris Toop, the student undertaking the work is doing an excellent job surveying the routes, which is no small undertaking. It is hoped that the work will be completed by the end of the year".

## Visit

[www.countryside.gov.uk/LAR/Regions/NorthEast/activities/recreation/countryside/recreation/vulnerability-mapping.asp](http://www.countryside.gov.uk/LAR/Regions/NorthEast/activities/recreation/countryside/recreation/vulnerability-mapping.asp) for details on the new methodology. Call Simon Wilson on 01388 528801 ([simon@northpenninesaonb.org.uk](mailto:simon@northpenninesaonb.org.uk)) for further information on the North Pennines mapping exercise

# NATURAL ENGLAND OPENS DOORS



*Spectacular North Pennines landscape in Upper Weardale © Shane Harris/NPAP*

From the beginning of October 2006 English Nature, the environment activities of the Rural Development Service and the Countryside Agency's Landscape, Access and Recreation division united in a single organisation called Natural England.

Martyn Howatt is the man charged with leading the new organisation in the North

East. Natural England will work for people, places and nature, to enhance biodiversity, landscapes and wildlife in rural, urban, coastal and marine areas; promoting access, recreation and public well-being, and contributing to the way natural resources are managed so that they can be enjoyed now and by future generations.

Martyn proved to be a natural choice to

become the North East Regional Director for Natural England, having spent the past 20 years as English Nature's North East Area Manager and Regional Director. He has extensive knowledge of land management matters, especially knowledge of the uplands, and has a great deal of experience of working with regional partners in the North East to develop a range of sustainable, environmental projects.

He said: "I'm looking forward to building on my experience and the many achievements that have already been made by the three organisations that have now come together as one. The North East has a rich and diverse wildlife and landscapes, with the North Pennines AONB a marvellous example. We will be working closely with government, businesses, local communities, the farming and conservation sectors, voluntary organisations and individuals to protect and improve the North East's wildlife and its landscapes."

Natural England's Strategic Direction 2006-2009 sets out what Natural England will deliver and can be found on the Defra website at [www.defra.gov.uk/rds/towardsne.htm](http://www.defra.gov.uk/rds/towardsne.htm)

# TOURISM CLIMATE CHALLENGE



Langdon Beck Youth Hostel © Shane Harris/NPAP

A series of free, one day seminars for owners and operators of tourism businesses is being run this winter at YHA Langdon Beck. The seminars are funded through the Defra's Climate Challenge Fund initiative. They are a joint venture between YHA and the North Pennines AONB Partnership and they have the backing of One NorthEast.

The seminars will be led by Ewan Boyd, YHA's national Environment Manager and the person responsible for turning YHA Langdon Beck into the UK's first tourism business to gain the coveted EU Eco Label Award. The hostel

at Langdon Beck has reduced energy consumption by 50% and carbon emissions by 75% over recent years. "The public is becoming more aware of environmental issues and these seminars are designed to help businesses compete in an increasingly tough marketplace," highlights Ewan.

"The one-day events will focus on how environmental management can be used to both identify efficiency and cost savings and attract more customers," says Ewan. "A central theme will be tackling rising energy costs and associated carbon emissions. All businesses are now

experiencing steep rises in fuel costs, and the seminars will highlight simple measures that can make significant monetary savings as well as reducing carbon emissions. Water, waste, procurement and communicating the message to customers are other areas that will also be explored".

"We are delighted to be supporting the YHA to run this series of seminars which all North Pennines tourism businesses can attend. The links with the roll-out of the Green Tourism Business Scheme, which the AONB Partnership is supporting, in the NE Region are particularly timely," added Shane Harris, Sustainable Tourism Officer for the AONB Partnership Staff Unit.

Participants will be encouraged to draw up a simple environmental policy for their business, and there will also be opportunities to investigate taking things further through the Green Tourism Business Scheme and the Eco Label Award.

For further details, including seminar dates, contact Ewan Boyd on 01833 622228 ([langdonbeck@yha.org.uk](mailto:langdonbeck@yha.org.uk))

# WEARHEAD WINS DIGITAL ARTS AWARD

## Rachel Clarke takes up the story...

"In May 2005 Wearhead Primary School participated in 'It Rocks' a project working with artists, museums and quarry sites to create puppets, animation and digital images about the rocks and fossils in their area. The project was a great success receiving funding and support from the Hub Museums Fund, North Pennines AONB Partnership, La Farge Community Fund, Millenium Awards, Mineral Valleys Project, Harehope Quarry Project and Wear Valley Arts.

"So what's next?" Mrs Gill, Junior teacher at Wearhead began to cry, demanding more projects like It Rocks. We put it forward for a few awards and went away on holiday only to return and discover that the school had won a prestigious Chrisi Bailey Award - a national accolade for children's innovative digital art work!

Representatives from Wearhead Primary School, the Hancock Museum, Killhope Museum, me and puppeteer Emma Boor travelled to London to collect the award which consisted of a cash prize and a box full of goodies, including creative software and cameras for the school. They collected their prize as part of Children's Art Day in Trafalgar Square where thousands of people could see their work on big projection screens.

It is fantastic that Wearhead have won this prestigious award, all the students worked really hard on computers and cameras to create work for this project. They had tons of great ideas which have now been nationally recognised.

Students have already been hatching a plan on what to do with the money. A film idea and script was created a few months ago and now with some funds and new software they can develop their creative potential even more."



Louise Moore (Killhope), Rachel Clarke (digital artist), Sebastian Robson, Naomi Hewitt - Hancock Museum, Megan Evans, Emma Boor (puppeteer) and Amelia Robson in Trafalgar Square after receiving their Chrisi Bailey Award © Karen Robson

More information from Rachel Clarke on 01388 710700 ([talk2me@rachelc.co.uk](mailto:talk2me@rachelc.co.uk))

# GEOPARK ART

Weardale artist Gavin Mayhew has seen at first hand some of the benefits of the North Pennines AONB's status as a UNESCO European and Global Geopark. Gavin has just returned from Psiloritis European Geopark, Crete, after being selected by the North Pennines AONB Partnership to take part in a collaborative art project with artists from six other European Geoparks. The visit was entirely funded by the Greek authorities.

Gavin took part in a Summer Painting Festival - one of several organised by communities across Crete in August. The festival saw the painting of public buildings and walls throughout Rouvas, drawing inspiration from the local landscape, people and environment.

Gavin, from Westgate in Weardale, has recently completed his BA (Hons.) degree in fine art at Sunderland University. He said: "What a fantastic opportunity! A few days into our trip, after visiting the area, we were shown our allotted walls onto which to paint our murals. I, along with



Gavin at work on his Geopark mural in Crete

an artist from Austria, chose a 30m by 4m wall. It was quite a challenge to finish it the four days we had! It was as much a pleasure to have made a piece of history in Crete as it was to have sampled the generosity and friendliness of the local people."

North Pennines AONB Officer and Geopark Manager Chris Woodley-Stewart added, "We're really pleased to have been

able to give this opportunity to Gavin and to further our partnership working with other Geoparks".

More information from Chris Woodley-Stewart, North Pennines AONB Officer, on 01388 528801 ([chris@northpenninesaonb.org.uk](mailto:chris@northpenninesaonb.org.uk))

## SQUIRREL SOS

The Save our Squirrels (SOS) initiative, led by Northumberland Wildlife Trust and funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund, was launched early in 2006. The focus of the project is habitat management alongside educating and involving people in red squirrel conservation.

The SOS project team is very keen to support local squirrel initiatives and Allendale are already off the mark with an initiative from the Allendale Lions taking shape to fund their own red squirrel project with local volunteers.

Carri Nicholson, SOS Project Manager, said: "We are devising an exciting programme to get people on the ground involved in looking after one of our best loved mammals". She added: "Part of my role is to encourage members of the public to get involved, together with 'champion schools', to help drive forward the recovery of red squirrel numbers in the North of England.

The project focus is public education, habitat improvement and the control of grey squirrels in and around 16 red

squirrel refuges throughout the North. At these sites and in 5km buffer zones surrounding them, people can get involved in monitoring and surveying existing red squirrel populations through



© Kevin Cook

sightings and other survey methods. "We'll also need volunteers to report any grey squirrel sightings in the reserves and buffer zones, leading to their trapping and control," explained Carri.

Three of the 16 refuges are close to the northern boundary of the North Pennines AONB. These are Dipton-Dukeshouse Wood, near Hexham, Healey-Kellas near Slaley and Slaley-Dukesfield.

The SOS Action Plan is strongly based on experience and research involving the Forestry Commission, landowners, gamekeepers and academic institutions, including the University of Newcastle. "Landowners can also help develop positive habitats for the red squirrel by planting small seeded trees like birch, alder, holly, hawthorn, rowan, and blackthorn, and by leaving some scrub areas containing brambles," highlighted Carri.

Contact Carri Nicholson on 0191 2846884 ([carri.nicholson@northwt.org.uk](mailto:carri.nicholson@northwt.org.uk)) for information on how to get involved

# AREA CO-ORDINATOR CORNER

The Area Co-ordinators are the first points of contact for the geographical area they cover. They seek to identify, develop and deliver projects linked to the purpose of AONB designation – ‘to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the area’. Each of the Area Co-ordinators also has a specialist area of responsibility: West – Historic Environment; East – Access and Recreation; and North – Land Management.

## EAST

- **Simon Wilson**  
([simon@northpenninesaonb.org.uk](mailto:simon@northpenninesaonb.org.uk))

The use of the area by mechanically propelled vehicles has occupied much of Simon's time, including managing a student placement undertaking network surveys (page 12). Simon is continuing to work on a number of forthcoming publications on cycling, open access and public transport. Along with other staff, Simon has attended shows and events through the summer and continues to make contact with people in business and land managers in the area. He is also managing the Water Vole Project Officer, Lee Rankin who joined the team in June and is developing a Water Vole Action Plan for the North Pennines (article page 4, North Pennines News Spring & Summer 2006).

## NORTH (JOB SHARE)

- **Rebecca Barrett**  
([rebecca@northpenninesaonb.org.uk](mailto:rebecca@northpenninesaonb.org.uk))  
and
- **Lesley Silvera**  
([lesley@northpenninesaonb.org.uk](mailto:lesley@northpenninesaonb.org.uk))

Over the summer Rebecca has been busy establishing the new Hay Time project, organising the Plants on High Festival (page 7) and running a series of workshops on bird identification and calaminarian grassland management. The coming months will see the production of a number of publications supporting the Hay Time project. Lesley started work in August, as cover for Sarah Tooze's maternity leave. Her first priority has been to keep the Drystone Walling Apprenticeship Scheme moving along. She has also been involved with Slaley Parish Council developing a local tree planting scheme, and in Allendale with the new SOS initiative (page 14).

## WEST

- **Chris Jones**  
([cjones@northpenninesaonb.org.uk](mailto:cjones@northpenninesaonb.org.uk))

Chris has recently joined the staff unit as maternity cover for Katharine Birdsall. He is continuing to work closely with the AONB Partnership's Historic Environment Working Group to establish a Historic Environment Officer post within the Staff Unit. Chris is also in discussions with English Heritage regarding the development of a number of landscape archaeology surveys within the AONB. Work has begun in Scordale to record the Scheduled Ancient Monuments threatened by flooding and river catchment erosion caused by severe rainfall episodes. The work will enhance our understanding of how environmental, climate change and archaeological factors affect the long-term management, conservation and interpretation of an important upland lead mining landscape.

Contact the Area Co-ordinators at the AONB Partnership Staff Unit on 01388 528801

## SUSTAINABLE SLACK HOUSE FARM

Slack House Farm near Ireshopeburn is a smallholding with a commitment to sustainability. Phil and Ellie Langley are keen to share their enthusiasm and, with the help of a Small Grant from the North Pennines AONB Partnership, have begun a programme of rural and craft workshops. Their small grant contributed to the cost of a timber workshop – fully insulated and with a woodburning stove – and the adjoining composting toilet, a surprising hit with workshop participants!

Workshops have included willow weaving and feltmaking – Ellie is a feltmaker, using fleeces from her own flock of rare breed sheep – and healing plants, which proved very successful as part of the 2006 Plants on High Festival.

Slack House Farm won awards in the

2005 Durham County Council Environment Awards for Energy Efficiency - the smallholding is powered entirely by renewable energy - and an Outstanding Award for exemplary practice.

In 2007 Ellie and Phil hope to be able to add workshops on permaculture, biodiesel production and oak swill basket



Learning how to construct willow sculptures at a Slack House Farm workshop © Ellie and Phil Langley



Felt workshop at Slack House Farm © Ellie and Phil Langley

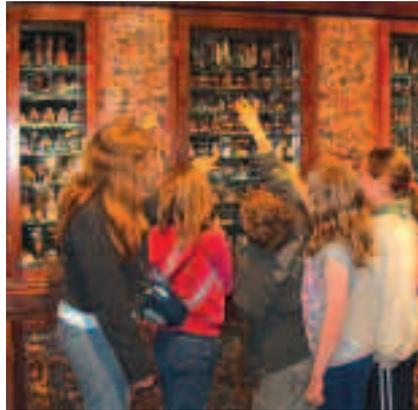
making. 2007 will also see the beginning of Bed and Breakfast accommodation at Slack House Farm, thanks to a Defra Rural Enterprise Scheme grant.

For more information visit [www.fleecewithaltitude.co.uk](http://www.fleecewithaltitude.co.uk) or call Ellie and Phil on 01388 537292

# HIDDEN LANDSCAPES

The artist David Walker Barker and Ian Forbes from Killhope, the North of England Lead Mining Museum were chatting outside the Friends of Killhope mineral exhibition a while ago. Both share an enthusiasm for North Pennine minerals and miners spar boxes as well as for the leadmining landscapes of the Pennines. From this meeting of minds a collaboration developed which bore fruit last summer in a powerful exhibition of work – ‘In Search of a Hidden Landscape’ which David created especially for the museum.

David has a deep passion for the North Pennines. In particular he has great respect for “t’owd man” – the generations of miners – now faceless and forgotten – who created the subterranean world of



© Killhope Lead Mining Museum

lead and fluorspar mining. This passion for people, geology and landscape fed through into David’s work. He produced richly textured and coloured pieces which

contain a myriad of detail and which resonate with echoes of spar boxes, religious icons and reliquaries. Each work was designed for a specific location at the museum and they were to be found all over the site. They were not just in the gallery spaces but also in the historic buildings and even down the mine.

David Walker Barker teaches at the University of Leeds and exhibits regularly in London. The project was co-funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council and the Department of Contemporary Art Practice, School of Design, Leeds University.

More details from Ian Forbes on 01388 537505 (killhope@durham.gov.uk)

## NEWS IN BRIEF

### Breeding Kites

For the first time in over 170 years red kites have nested in Teesdale, raising two chicks. These russet coloured birds have a wingspan of nearly 2m and a distinctive forked tail. They were released as part of the Northern Kites Project, based in Gateshead’s Derwent valley. Another four red kites have taken up residence in Teesdale and hopefully they will establish a thriving population in the AONB. More information from Northern Kites on 0191



Teesdale’s breeding male kite © Northern Kites

4961555 (info@northernkites.org.uk) or visit [www.northernkites.org.uk](http://www.northernkites.org.uk)

### Royal Visit

In July 2006 Deneholme, in Allendale, was visited by HRH the Duke of Gloucester on a rare trip to the North East. His arrival in Allendale was met with cheers from flag-waving children from Allendale First School. Deneholme was chosen because of his passion for historic buildings and interest in rural affairs and community leadership. Fawside has been responsible for developing the building as a centre for community-led sustainable tourism.

### New Flower Guide

The North Pennines is one of the best places in the country to enjoy upland hay meadows. To help people discover some of the special species found in our meadows, the AONB Partnership has produced a free flower and grass identification guide.

The guide is printed on tough, weather-resistant paper and provides an excellent introduction to finding and identifying hay meadow plants. Request a copy by calling 01388 528801 (info@northpenninesaonb.org.uk)

### Holwick Climbing

When Open Access commenced in 2005, concerns were raised over the impact that renewed climbing might have at Holwick Scar in Teesdale.

Following a survey of the site, the British Mountaineering Council has agreed access guidelines with English Nature, the Countryside Agency and Durham County Council.

This is an excellent example of organisations working together to help protect a special feature in the AONB whilst enabling responsible access. Leaflets are available on site or visit [www.thebmc.co.uk](http://www.thebmc.co.uk) or [www.climbingcrags.co.uk](http://www.climbingcrags.co.uk) for details.

### Quakers’ Hole Award

The Quakers’ Hole Wetland Project in Whitley Chapel which received funding from the AONB Partnership’s Small Grant Scheme (and others) has been awarded one of Northumberland Wildlife Trust’s Conservation Awards.

“This is an excellent example of a community-led conservation project and we are delighted to congratulate them on their award,” says Rebecca Barrett, North Pennines AONB Partnership’s Area Coordinator North.