

NORTH PENNINES NEWS

Spring & Summer 2007



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NORTH PENNINES

Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty





© Natural England/Charlie Hedley

A letter from the Chairman

Dear Readers,

Welcome to the Spring and Summer edition of North Pennines News, the magazine which updates you on the activities of the North Pennines AONB Partnership and other organisations in the area.



There is a lot going on in the North Pennines AONB and UNESCO European Geopark, both through the work of the Staff Unit and through the efforts of others (see, for example, the 'Pastures for Plovers' article on page 10). Since the last edition of North Pennines News the full Stage 2 application for the 'Living North Pennines' project has been submitted to the Heritage Lottery Fund. If successful this initiative will lead to £3m of heritage, conservation, education, and access work in the North Pennines between late 2007 and 2010.

The AONB Partnership Staff Unit has gained a Gold Award for its corporate offices and tourism activities under the Green Tourism Business Scheme. This green accreditation demonstrates the Partnership's commitment to promoting the principles of sustainable tourism in the North Pennines. The AONB Partnership also supported six North Pennine tourism businesses to join the scheme and will continue to actively promote take-up in the AONB - see lead article on page 3.

The AONB Staff Unit has been joined by Jon Charlton as Historic Environment Officer. This new appointment will enable the Partnership to expand its focus on the built heritage of the North Pennines and also will help the Staff Unit to attract support for future conservation initiatives (see page 6).

All in all the efforts of the AONB Partnership, through its Staff Unit, to 'conserve and enhance' the natural beauty of the area are continuing with every success and support from partner organisations and the many dedicated individuals who cherish and appreciate this very special part of England.

Cllr Bob Pendlebury
Chairman, North Pennines AONB Partnership

We can provide the information contained in this publication in large print, different formats and other languages on request. Please call 01388 528801 for details.

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The North Pennines AONB Partnership holds a Gold GTBS Award for its corporate offices and tourism activities.



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and the area's nine Local Authorities

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Front cover image: Cycling the off-road C2C between Rookhope and Park Head (Wilkinson's Cut) © Shane Harris / NPAP

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GOING FOR GREEN

Six tourism businesses in the North Pennines AONB, from B&Bs and self-catering cottages to conference venues and visitor attractions, have scooped awards in the Green Tourism Business Scheme (GTBS). The AONB Partnership Staff Unit has also achieved a Gold award in recognition of its environmental practices at its offices and its wider support of sustainable tourism in the North Pennines.

The six businesses are:

- Deneholme Residential & Conference Centre, Allendale (Allen Valleys) — SILVER
- East Briscoe Farm Cottages, Self-catering, Baldersdale (Teesdale) — GOLD
- Killhope, the North of England Lead Mining Museum (Weardale) — GOLD
- Low Cornriggs Farmhouse, B&B & Self-catering, Cowshill (Weardale) — SILVER
- Ninebanks Youth Hostel, Ninebanks (Allen Valleys) — GOLD
- Pasture Cottage, Self-catering, Wolsingham (Weardale) — SILVER

Emma Wilson from East Briscoe Farm Cottages in Baldersdale said: "We are delighted to receive the Gold award. We have always focused on being environmentally-friendly but working with the GTBS has helped us to look in detail at how we can further reduce our impact on the environment. Following an initial assessment we increased our loft insulation/draft-proofing and installed energy-efficient light bulbs. We also let our guests know more about our environmental policies - and how they can help too. Our business is greener and more attractive to guests and we're also saving money on energy costs!"



Killhope – the North of England Lead Mining Museum has achieved a Gold GTBS award © David Williams/Killhope

The North Pennines AONB Partnership has been working in conjunction with the One NorthEast Tourism Team, Green Business UK, the Northumberland Coast AONB and Northumberland National Park to encourage membership of the GTBS in the North East Region.

Shane Harris, Sustainable Tourism Officer for the AONB Partnership, highlighted: "Much of the tourism offer in the area is directly dependent on the area's high quality environment. Many visitors to the North Pennines want to be environmentally friendly and the GTBS quality seal of approval provides that assurance."



East Briscoe Farm Cottages in Baldersdale have been presented with a Gold GTBS award

To enter the GTBS award holders need to demonstrate that they are: minimising their impact on the environment; communicating their green credentials to their customers; and having a positive impact on their surroundings. To do this they need to implement a number of practical measures covering business



management, communication, energy efficiency, water savings, waste minimisation, green purchasing, transport, and wildlife conservation.

Funding for the six North Pennines businesses to enter the GTBS came from

the North Pennines AONB Partnership, as part of its Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas (STiPA) programme. STiPA was funded by One NorthEast and EU INTERREG IIIc programme.

The future

Funding has been secured, from Natural England (via the West Durham Rural Pathfinder), to support further work to encourage the GTBS in the AONB. The initiative will include: support for 20 new tourism businesses to join the green accreditation scheme; running two 'Greening Your Business' Seminars; and 'Greening Your Business' Grants to help tourism businesses entering the GTBS to carry out projects in support of their application.

Chris Woodley-Stewart, North Pennines AONB Officer, concluded: "This funding is invaluable in supporting the further expansion of the GTBS in the North Pennines". He added: "An additional 20 tourism businesses joining the scheme in the North Pennines, together with the six we've already funded, will significantly boost the area's potential to be marketed as a green destination."

Find out more:

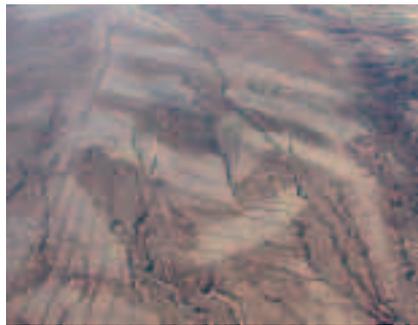
- If you run a tourism business in the North Pennines and you are interested in joining the Green Tourism Business Scheme please contact Shane Harris, Sustainable Tourism and Communications Officer for the AONB Partnership, on 01388 528801 (shane@northpenninesaonb.org.uk)
- To find out what is happening to encourage GTBS in the North East Region contact Janet Smith, Business Improvement Programme Co-ordinator with the One NorthEast Tourism Team, on 0191 229 6841 (janet.smith@onenortheast.co.uk)
- For specific information on the scheme visit www.green-business.co.uk or call 01738 632162 (gtbs@green-business.co.uk)

GIVE PEAT A CHANCE!

Most people are aware of some of the Earth's celebrated ecosystems - the tropical rain forests are the lungs of the earth, the boreal forests covering millions of square kms of the northern hemisphere, the deserts and oceans of the world. Yet among this distinguished group there is a home-grown ecosystem that frequently gets over-looked. Peatlands are often unappreciated and have a low profile. "Their significance is often lost, perhaps because they are so close and familiar," speculates the AONB Partnership's Peatscapes Project Manager, Paul Leadbitter.

"The benefits of healthy, wet peatlands are numerous and their importance to us now and in the future is vital to managing climate change, flood risk, biodiversity, the economy and the historical record," highlights Paul. "Peat is a store of carbon; it is estimated that each hectare of peat in the UK contains 5,000 tonnes of carbon. With 15% of the world's peatlands, the UK has 20 years of industrial carbon dioxide emissions locked in the peat; and it needs to stay there. In the North Pennines a key threat to this carbon storage system is the drying of peatlands because of the widespread drainage of them."

A survey, carried out by the AONB



North Pennine drainage channels or 'grips', as seen from the air © Environment Agency

Partnership, has identified 9,400km of grips (drainage ditches) or 60,000 individual channels in the North Pennines. These grips are increasing carbon dioxide release, flooding risk and water colour. With climate change now firmly in the sights of politicians and with the link between healthy peatlands and carbon storage being better understood, the concept of using peatlands as a carbon management tools is gaining credibility.

Grip blocking using peat plugs is a simple, cost effective solution to the drainage issue and we are starting to see signs of the commitment and will to complete such work. With 9,400km of

grips to assess and restore there is much work to do but the benefit to us and to future generations is established. By taking a proactive approach to peatland restoration there will be a sustainable future for peatlands in the North Pennines.



North Pennines dry stone walling apprentices blocking drainage grips on Blanchland Moor in March 2007 © Shane Harris/North Pennines AONB Partnership

More information from Paul Leadbitter, Peatscapes Project Manager, on 01388 528801 (paulpeatscapes@northpenninesaonb.org.uk)

SCHOOL OF ROCKS

In a previous edition of North Pennines News the start of a project to produce educational resources to help teachers make the most of North Pennines' geology and landscape was highlighted.

Durham University and the Harehope Quarry Project were engaged by the



A Rock Box in action at a recent Harehope Quarry Rock Detectives Club © Harehope Quarry Project



AONB Partnership to help produce the resources, which comprise teachers' packs and activity sheets for Key Stages 1 to 4, and twenty 'Rock Boxes' with superb samples of local rocks, minerals and replica fossils. "This is a fantastic resource for schools - both local and further afield, and we have already had a lot of interest," said Elizabeth Pickett, Geodiversity Officer with the AONB Partnership.

Rock Boxes and teachers' packs will be

permanently located at the North Pennines AONB Partnership Staff Unit, and will be on long term loan to Harehope Quarry, Killhope - the North of England Lead Mining Museum, Nenthead Mines Heritage Centre, Talkin Tarn Country Park and Durham University. The rest of the boxes and resources will be available for loan from the AONB Partnership Staff Unit for a small deposit.

Funding for the resources comes through the AONB Partnership's Rockworks project, with this element funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund, LEADER + and Natural England.

Contact Elizabeth Pickett, Geodiversity Officer, on 01388 528801 (elizabeth@northpenninesaonb.org.uk)

NENTHEAD BLACKSMITH

Mark Fearn and his son Karl are traditional blacksmiths based at Nenthead. They have worked in and around the North Pennines for 15 years as blacksmiths and metalworkers and are inspired by the historic industrialisation of the area. The old mine workings, which they frequently explore, have in many ways shaped the approach to their work.

“Starting off with very basic tools - a home made forge and an old quarry hammer head as an anvil, we worked outside for many years. We now have a small forge shop and offer a service across the North Pennines and beyond. We’ve steadily built up a reputation of being able to forge and fabricate many unusual one-off commissions. We specialise in the obscure and the unusual, and being able to keep old machines and tools running that otherwise would have been scrapped. Ironwork restoration is a particular strength, and we have restored a number of old cooking ranges into full



The weather vane on Stanhope Church was restored by Mark Fearn & Son – traditional blacksmiths, based in Nenthead © Mark Fearn

working order. An interesting project was restoring and installing the weather vane on St. Thomas the Apostle Church in Stanhope.

Over the years we have worked at customers’ properties, repairing stoves,

and making and installing fireplace parts and other ironwork for building restoration projects. An increasing number of people know where to turn to when something breaks or when something a little bit special or unusual is required.

We have a vivid interest in historic ironwork production, and mix old techniques with modern tools and approaches. We’re always mindful of the fact that the old time smith had nothing of what we have today in the way of modern equipment but still they managed to spawn an awesome array of skills; to say nothing of stories and legends surrounding the forge shop!”

Find out more from Mark on
01434 382194
mark@fearn2620.freeserve.co.uk
or visit www.alstoncraftworkers.co.uk

YHA NINEBANKS EXPANDS

This year YHA Ninebanks celebrates its 60th anniversary as a Youth Hostel. Originally a lead miner’s cottage and adjacent mine shop, the two buildings have recently been joined together with the addition of a new dining room and small ensuite bedrooms



*The new dining room at Ninebanks YHA
© Pauline Elliott*

to add to existing facilities.

“The buildings have been renovated and sensitively refurbished to a high environmental standard, with solar hot water and electricity; the open coal fire has been replaced with a log burning stove. There was also some re-use involved in the purchasing of furniture, as the room tables and chairs were previously in the National Gallery café and curtains came from a 5* hotel at Marble Arch,” says Pauline Elliott, Hostel Manager. “These innovations all contributed to the hostel getting a Gold Green Tourism Business Scheme (GTBS) award (see page 3),” added Pauline.

The dining room doubles as a meeting/classroom as well as an ideal party space and will be hosting a geological holiday as part of the Northern Rocks Festival. It has already been used

for family birthday parties, field trips and a digital photography workshop. To finish the work a reconstruction of the typical North Pennines cyclothem is being built into the new retaining wall behind the hostel along with other interpretive geological material. The renovation work at the hostel was part funded by the AONB Partnership’s Sustainable Development Fund. Elizabeth Pickett, Geodiversity Officer at the AONB Partnership, is also helping with the geological interpretation at the hostel.

Last year YHA sold Alston, Baldersdale and Kirkby Stephen and all of these were bought by people who will continue to run them within the YHA network, so the North Pennines hostel network remains unchanged in number with Dufton, Edmundbyers and Langdon Beck completing the list.

For more information on YHA Ninebanks and the wider North Pennines Network please contact Pauline Elliott, Ninebanks Manager and YHA Group Manager for the North Pennines and Hadrian’s Wall, on 01434 345288 (ninebanks@yha.co.uk) or visit www.yha.org.uk

WAYMARKING THE WAY

On the 22 March Durham County Council's Rights of Way officers walked 75km of the Weardale Way through the North Pennines, so that others can safely do the same. As they walked the ten officers installed waymarks along the regional route from Sunderland Bridge near Durham to Cowshill in Upper Weardale. The complete 124km (77 mile) route runs from Sunderland to Killhope – the North of England Lead Mining Museum, passing through Chester-le-Street, Durham, Bishop Auckland and Stanhope.

Each team member covered a section of the route so that the whole task could be completed in a day. Organised by Elaine Field and Leigh Coulson, it was a great success in raising the profile of the Weardale Way and bringing the route up to standard, and as a team building exercise. It also enabled senior officers to get out and experience the joys of walking in the North Pennines again!

As part of the Mineral Valleys Project, supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund, the County Council has carried out a programme of improvements along the Weardale Way, installing new gates, stiles and signposts. The next stage was for the



New gate and waymark on the Weardale Way © Mike Ogden/Durham County Council

route to be waymarked with specially designed arrows located at key points to help to ensure that walkers are less likely to lose their way.

A new guidebook to the entire route will soon be published by local author Alistair Wallace. A series of self-guided circular walks, based around villages along the route, is also being developed. Copies of the Rookhope circular route are

available from the Durham Dales Centre in Stanhope (01388 527650, durham.dales.centre@durham.gov.uk).

Visit www.weardaleway.com for more details on the route. For further information on the waymarking project contact Mike Ogden at Durham County Council on 0191 383 4082

HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT GAINS OFFICER

Jon Charlton has joined the North Pennines AONB Partnership as Historic Environment Officer. This three year appointment will enable the AONB Staff Unit, supported by the



Jon Charlton © Shane Harris/NPAP

AONB Partnership's Historic Environment Working Group, to expand its focus on the built heritage of the North Pennines and also to attract support for future conservation initiatives.

Working closely with Local Authority partners, residents and interest groups, Jon will also be looking at Conservation Areas in the AONB and drawing up Conservation Area Appraisals aimed at conserving special features and enhancing people's understanding and appreciation and will hopefully lead to further initiatives in the future.

Jon said: "It is a privilege to be working in such a beautiful area of the country and I am looking forward to getting to know as much as possible about

local projects and initiatives, seeing the tremendous work that has taken place to date, and contributing to future plans".

Jon was previously the Deputy Director of a Civic Society and Heritage Trust in Derbyshire. In addition to running a busy heritage site receiving in excess of 100,000 visitors each year, the trust was an educational charity dedicated to the conservation and interpretation of industrial heritage. Jon was responsible for planning and managing community conservation projects focussed on the industrial heritage of the Derwent Valley. In recent years he has also been closely involved in the inscription, by UNESCO, of the Derwent Valley Mills World Heritage Site.

Contact Jon Charlton, Historic Environment Officer at the AONB Partnership, on 01388 528801 (jcharlton@northpenninesaonb.org.uk)

50 TREES FOR 50 YEARS

As part of a national initiative to celebrate 50 years of Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs) in England and Wales, the North Pennines AONB Partnership has provided trees to communities to be planted across the area.

One of the schemes was organised by the Alston Moor Partnership. Fifty trees, donated by the AONB Partnership, were planted as part of enhancement schemes at Fairhill and Garrigill recreation grounds. The Pennine Pioneers and Garrigill Youth Club planted the trees on Garrigill Recreation Grounds in early March this year. The 50 trees at Alston and Garrigill are part of a wider initiative to mark the 50th anniversary of the designation of the very first Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty – the Gower in South Wales.

“In total 360 trees have been donated to a variety of groups, including Parish

Councils, across the North Pennines AONB,” says Chris Woodley-Stewart, North Pennines AONB Officer. “We wrote to Parish Councils early last year to see who would like to be involved. As a result we’ve supplied native, broad-leaved trees for planting in Cotherstone, Hunderthwaite, Eggleston, Stanhope, Forest-in-Teesdale, Mickleton, Slaley and Alston Moor.”

The Alston tree planting scheme was a joint venture led by the Alston Moor Partnership who commissioned the work with help from Garrigill councillors Alan Green, Tim Haldon, Colin Simms and Geoff Carrick. Further advice was provided by East Cumbria Countryside Project and Pat Godwin from the Fairhill Recreation Grounds Trust.



Castle Carrock residents and Chris Jones, from the AONB Staff Unit, planting a tree supplied by the AONB Partnership as part of the 50 Trees for 50 Years initiative © Tricia Meynell

For more information on the 50 Trees initiative contact the AONB Partnership Staff Unit on 01388 528801 (info@northpenninesaonb.org.uk)

For more information on AONBs visit www.visitaonb.org.uk or www.aonb.org.uk

TRADING ON ‘NATURAL BEAUTY’

Research has indicated that last year’s North Pennines Visitor Guide generated almost £840,000 in the local economy. The research, carried out by Customer Maze, looked at the success of a promotional campaign of this internationally protected and cherished landscape by Cumbria Tourism and the North Pennines AONB Partnership. Overall for every £1 spent on the campaign £47 was generated in the North Pennine economy.

The campaign was based on a free prize draw to win a short break for two at Lowbyer Manor Country House in Alston (www.lowbyer.com). A total of 5,000 North Pennines Visitor Guides were requested. 12% of these requests resulted in visits to the North Pennines – 63% were overnight visits. 77% of these visitors used the Visitor Guide to help them to plan their days out.



Keri Smith, Area Development Manager for Eden and the North Pennines with Cumbria Tourism, said: “We have been delighted with the response to the campaign and the resulting positive effect it has had on the local economy in the North Pennines”.

Shane Harris, Sustainable Tourism Officer for the AONB Partnership, commented: “We are pleased that the

campaign has successfully introduced the delights of the North Pennines to a new audience of walkers, cyclists, bird watchers, horse riders and people interested in visiting natural attractions – like High Force in Upper Teesdale.”

68% of people who responded to the survey said that they would be more likely to book accommodation which takes measures to protect the environment. This highlights the link between visiting a high quality environment, like the North Pennines, and staying in accommodation which takes steps to look after it.

The campaign was funded by Cumbria Tourism and the North Pennines AONB Partnership through its Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas programme – an initiative which was funded by One NorthEast and TouriSME, an EU INTERREG IIIc programme.

Call 01388 528801 (info@northpenninesaonb.org.uk) to get hold of a copy of the 2007 guide. It’s also available as a PDF download from the AONB Partnership’s website. Look in the ‘Exploring the North Pennines Directory’ at www.northpennines.org.uk

SPOTLIGHT ON ... WHEELS TO THE WILD CYCLE ROUTE



Quiet roads, wild moors, scenic dales and welcoming communities are waiting to be discovered. By following the rides in the new Wheels to the Wild Cycle Route you can explore some of the best cycling the AONB has to offer!

Glorious cycling in the North Pennines AONB and UNESCO European Geopark © Shane Harris/North Pennines AONB Partnership

The Wheels to the Wild Cycle Route is 122km long and provides an excellent way to discover what's so very special about the North Pennines AONB and UNESCO European and Global Geopark. It follows surfaced roads, most of which are quiet lanes. Opportunities for off-road alternatives to the main route are shown in some places.

The Route

The main routes fits nicely into a leisurely three-day short break giving you the time to appreciate the unique North Pennines landscape and geology and enjoy some of its special attractions along the way. If you decide to ride the route in three days (48km, 42km and 33km) you'll find suitable overnight accommodation in and

around Wolsingham, Alston and Middleton-in-Teesdale.

The main route starts in Wolsingham and follows a circular route into the heart of the North Pennines visiting Stanhope, Rookhope, Allenheads, Nenthead, Alston, Garrigill, Yad Moss, Langdon Beck, Middleton-in-Teesdale, Eggleston and Hamsterley Forest before returning to Wolsingham.

Foundations

Following the Wheels to the Wild Cycle Route allows you to discover the foundations of this spectacular landscape – a story about tropical seas and swamps, super heated water and minerals, vast ice sheets, extensive peatlands and the indelible imprint of man and an industrial past. Find out about Frosterley marble, fossil trees, mines and mills, 410 million year old granite, coal and lead mining, limekilns and spectacular waterfalls, reservoirs and blanket bogs, birds and England's biggest waterfall – High Force, bird hot spots, rivers past and present, Great Limestone and landscapes moulded by ice, hay meadows and hushes, miner-farmer landscapes and much, much more besides!

Launch Rides

Cyclists in the North Pennines are gearing up to launch the new route. Two, advance booking only, guided launch rides are



being organised by the North Pennines AONB Partnership. Anyone interested in joining these rides should call the AONB Partnership on 01388 528801 (info@northpenninesaonb.org.uk).

The first launch ride will be on Wednesday 9 May, as part of the Cumbria Bike Fest, starting from Nenthead Mines Heritage Centre at 10.30am. The second ride is set to be on Friday 25 May, as part of the North Pennines Northern Rocks Festival. This time the cyclists will set off from Killhope - the North of England Lead Mining Museum, at 10am.

An ideal way to explore

Simon Wilson (North Pennines AONB Area Co-ordinator East), who worked on the project, said: "Developing the Wheels to the Wild Cycle Route has involved working with a wide range of individuals, organisations and businesses. The project included production of and marketing of the guide, installing new cycle facilities, investing in cycle-friendly accommodation

and improvements to routes. Cycling is an excellent way to explore and appreciate what the North Pennines AONB and Geopark has to offer. This new three-day route represents a significant improvement in the product and cycle-friendly infrastructure in the area."

Elizabeth Pickett (North Pennines AONB Geodiversity Officer), who was the principal author for the guide: "The route fits nicely into a leisurely three-day ride, giving cyclists the time to appreciate the unique North Pennines landscape and enjoy some of its special attractions along the way."

The guide

Route sections are described with full-colour OS map extracts, detailed directions to help you navigate and explanations of some of the geological and landscape features you'll pass on the way. Altitude profiles of the main route and three day rides also give you a clear indication of the ups and downs you'll encounter.



The spectacular Ashgill Force is easily accessible from the Wheels to the Wild Cycle Route © kg photography

Information Centres and other local outlets in the North Pennines.

Who funded the route?

Work to develop the Wheels to the Wild Cycle Route forms part of the Rockworks project, an initiative of the North Pennines AONB Partnership. It was funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund, Natural England and the Neighbourhood Renewal Unit.



Find out more

For further information on the Wheels to the Wild Cycle Route, the Rockworks project, or to book onto one of the Launch Rides, please contact the North Pennines AONB Staff Unit on 01388 528801 (info@northpenninesaonb.org.uk) or visit www.northpennines.org.uk

Day Rides

The guide also includes three 'do in a day' rides which link into the main route:

Waskerley Round (33.5km)

- Starting and finishing in Frosterley
- 60% off-road (620m of ascent)
- Wide mix of gradients, surfaces and stunning views. Route includes part of the Waskerley Way – a fine disused railway path (part of the C2C Cycle Route)

Swinhope High Challenge (38km)

- Starting and finishing in St. John's Chapel
- 10% off-road (835m of ascent)
- A demanding day linking Upper Weardale and Upper Teesdale in a ride to remember

Killhope Round (32km)

- Starting and finishing in Nenthead
- 10% off-road (725m of ascent)
- A superb circuit up and over a number of passes



How to get the guide

Costing £5 (cheques should be made payable to Durham County Council) the guide is available from the North Pennines AONB Partnership, Weardale Business Centre, The Old Co-op Building, 1 Martin Street, Stanhope, County Durham, DL13 2UY. It is also available from Tourist

Wider Cycling Initiative

The production of the Wheels to the Wild Cycle Route guide is part of a wider, £60,000 project to improve the cycling infrastructure in the North Pennines, including:

- Installation of **cycle parking** facilities at: Stanhope (Durham Dales Centre); St. Johns Chapel (Upper Weardale Village Hall); Killhope – the North of England Lead Mining Museum; Allenheads (Hemmel Café); Nenthead Mines Heritage Centre; Alston (South Tynedale Railway); and Garrigill (George and Dragon Public House).
- Cyclist welcome equipment** (e.g. dry storage, bike wash, tools, repair kits) at ten accommodation providers in Weardale.
- Bridleway surfacing** in Hamsterley and **gate installation** on the Waskerley Way
- Purchase of two new '**accessible cycles**' for hire through Weardale Community Transport.
- Cycle maintenance and repair kits** for Stanhope, Alston and Middleton-in-Teesdale Tourist Information Centres.

PASTURES FOR PLOVERS

The RSPB has been actively working for birds within the North Pennines AONB for many years. One of their most important current initiatives is the Pastures for Plovers project, which is financially supported by Natural England, the North Pennines AONB Partnership, Northern Rock Foundation and LEADER+.

The aim of the project is to offer practical advice to farmers and other land managers on environmental management measures that will help nesting birds. "The North Pennines AONB is of both national and international significance for its upland breeding wading birds," says David Morris, RSPB's Agricultural Advisor in the North Pennines. "The area is home to more than 22,000 pairs of breeding waders, making this the most important upland area in England for birds such as redshank, curlew, lapwing and snipe", he added.

Pastures for Plovers was launched in 2004 as a successor to the RSPB's Working with Waders project, which in three years helped influence management of more than 21,500 ha of agricultural land in the North Pennines.

In the last six months, around 200 farmers and other land managers have attended Pastures for Plovers events organised by project officer, David Morris. David has also provided advice on wader friendly land management over more than 8,300ha of the North Pennines. During the summer, there will be more events for farmers and guided walks for members of the public, including a 'Farming and Birds' walk in Allendale and a children's wader day in Upper Teesdale.

The traditional low input management of much of the farmland in the North Pennines has allowed breeding waders to thrive here, while they have declined elsewhere. Lapwing populations have declined by 50% elsewhere in the country, but in the North Pennines there have been encouraging signs of increases in breeding numbers. Lapwing densities can reach 38 pairs per km square on good habitat in Upper Teesdale which compares very well with the national average of only 2.27 pairs per square km!

Wet rushy pastures give waders the ideal conditions to raise their chicks and a well-managed area of grassland can support a wide range of species. The hay



Snipe © Andy Hay/RSPB Images



Lapwing © Andy Hay/RSPB Images

meadows of the North Pennines provide safe nesting conditions for curlews and the traditional management allows their young to fledge before the late August cutting. Lapwing can be found nesting on the open shorter grasslands and redshank use the wetter flushes around the farm. Both snipe and curlew can often be found in the slightly taller rushy areas of fields. The grazing of traditional breeds of cattle in these rush pastures provides the ideal grassland conditions for breeding waders.

Feeding areas for adult and young waders can be improved by wetting up

areas of grassland using a variety of methods, including creating shallow wetland areas or 'scrapes' and blocking drains and ditches to raise water levels. The project officer can advise on the construction of wet features for waders and other wildlife, that can often be funded under agri-environment schemes.

David Morris concludes: "We hope that by maintaining good management practice of grasslands now, wader breeding habitat can be maintained and improved to support these important and charismatic birds for future generations to enjoy".



RSPB's Pastures for Plovers Project Officer, David Morris, meets farmers in the North Pennines © RSPB

For further advice and information on farming and birds within the AONB contact David Morris, Agricultural Advisor on 01830 530137 (david.morris@rspb.org.uk)

NINE DARGUE BASTLE HOUSE

Fawside, the Allen Valley's community charity, has secured funding to acquire the Nine Dargue bastle house, a Grade II Listed Building. The building, situated north of the Steel Burn, in the East Allen Valley, is in a perilous state, with most of the first floor and roof structure already destroyed. The structure was identified in Peter Ryder's 1995 Survey of North Pennines Bastle Houses as in urgent need of conservation and without the intervention of Fawside the building would have been lost forever.

With the help of the Joicey Trust and Alan Evans Memorial Trust, Fawside bought the building in December 2006. Funding from the Architectural Heritage Fund and Northumberland County Council has allowed them to commission Peter Ryder to undertake archaeological survey work, and to employ Spence and Dower as specialist architects. Funding from the AONB Partnership's Small Grants Scheme is also helping this project along.

The feasibility study for the project includes two options: the first is to undertake consolidation work to ensure the building does not deteriorate further, and to open up the structure for public access and interpretation; and the second is to a more ambitious programme of reconstruction to enable the building to be used as a camping barn. This would allow Fawside to run the building as a modest social enterprise initiative. Full restoration of the structure is anticipated to cost in the region of £180,000.

James Watson, Fawside's Project Manager, said "It's a fascinating building, surrounded by a fantastic network of footpaths. We have visions of small groups arriving on foot, entering through the stone doorway, and huddling around an open fire in the evening, speculating about the lives of former occupants, some five hundred years ago and awakening the next day to the calls of lapwings and curlews!"

For more information on this project please contact James Watson at Fawside on 01434 683334 (james@fawside.org.uk)



Door in the Nine Dargue Bastle House © Fawside

NEW FACE AT ECCP

Jenny Pollard has recently been appointed as the new manager of the East Cumbria Countryside Project (ECCP) based at Warwick Bridge near Carlisle. ECCP was created in 1985 as a partnership between Carlisle City Council, Eden District Council and Cumbria County Council. The project acts to enhance, conserve, improve access to and encourage a better understanding of the countryside of east Cumbria.

Jenny has moved from Argyll and Bute on the west coast of Scotland where she was the manager of a local authority countryside access unit for four years. In this role she was responsible for

managing and delivering statutory duties in relation to Scotland's new access laws (the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003) and implementing practical access projects on the ground.

Jenny who is originally from Lancashire is now living in Brampton, Cumbria with her husband and dog, Meg. She enjoys drawing and painting and walking and running to keep fit.

Jenny said: "I am really excited about the challenge of this new post and the future development and strengthening of ECCP. ECCP has a strong history of successful countryside management delivery and a fantastic project area with so much potential. Partnership working has always been key to the work of ECCP. We have worked successfully with the North Pennines AONB Partnership and others on a number of exciting projects and we look forward to continuing this in the future".



Jenny Pollard

Jenny can be contacted at ECCP on 01228 564846 or at jennyp@eccp.org.uk

More information on the work of ECCP is available on their website at www.eccp.org.uk

GEOLOGY CLASSES

This autumn local people will have the opportunity to find out more about the fascinating geology and landscape of the North Pennines. Local geologist Brian Young will lead a 10-week study programme of indoor talks and field visits on behalf of the North Pennines AONB Partnership. Elizabeth Pickett, Geodiversity Officer for the AONB Partnership said: "We are delighted to have Brian leading this course with us. It is a great way for people to discover the geological heritage on their doorstep with expert guidance."

The course will explore the way in which the North Pennines has been shaped over hundreds of millions of years by tropical seas, rainforests, molten rock and vast ice sheets. Participants will find out about the dramatic Whin Sill, the area's world-famous minerals and mining heritage, and discover how the rocks have influenced natural habitats and human activity over thousands of years.

Brian is former District Geologist for Northern England with the British Geological Survey and has a wealth of knowledge about the rocks, minerals and mining heritage of the North Pennines. He is an experienced tutor and enjoys making the area's world-class geology



Brian Young with budding geologists on a field excursion in Scordale © Elizabeth Pickett/NPAP

accessible to all.

Funding for the course comes through the AONB Partnership's Rockworks

project, with this element of the work funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund, LEADER + and Natural England.

The course will run for 10 weeks and the first session will be held at St John's Chapel Town Hall in early September 2007, from 7pm to 8.30pm.

The cost will be £25 for the course. Course dates and details are still being finalised, but for more information or to sign up please call the AONB Partnership Staff Unit on 01388 528801

LESSONS FOR HAREHOPE

A new educational tool from France is now being used at Harehope Quarry Project in Weardale.

The AONB Partnership has bought the Georium for use at Harehope after staff saw it in action at the Reserve Geologique de Haut Provence European Geopark.

The Georium is a series of large low boxes, filled with sand or soil and casts and moulds of fossils. It allows children to have a go at being palaeontologists in the classroom and backs up outdoor study and exploration. Jill Essam from Harehope Quarry Project said, "We're delighted with the Georium and we think it is going to really help the children who come here to learn about Earth history and palaeontology in a fun new way."

AONB Partnership Geodiversity Officer Elizabeth Pickett said, "It is only



© Harehope Quarry Project

through our work with partner Geoparks that we are able to find out about opportunities like this. Reserve Geologique de Haut Provence is doing some excellent work in geotourism, education and conservation and the Georium was their invention. We also borrowed heavily on their 'Road of Time' project for our own Teesdale Time Trail work which we completed last year."

The funding for the Georium comes through the AONB Partnership's Rockworks project which is funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund, LEADER +, Natural England and the County Durham Environment Trust.

To find out more contact Jill Essam at Harehope Quarry Project (01388 528633 or 01388 528599) or Elizabeth Pickett at the AONB Partnership Staff Unit on 01388 528801 (elizabeth@northpenninesaonb.org.uk)

SHOWING OFF OUR OUTDOORS



Walking is a great way to get out and about in the North Pennines © Shane Harris/North Pennines AONB Partnership

To round off a year of celebrations to mark the 50th anniversary of the designation of the Gower Peninsula as Britain's first Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), all 49 AONBs joined forces to spread the word at the Ordnance Survey Outdoors Show at the NEC, Birmingham, in mid-March.

The North Pennines AONB and UNESCO European and Global Geopark was represented by Shane Harris – the AONB Partnership's Sustainable Tourism and Communications Officer. "People visiting the Outdoor Show are a key target market for the North Pennines,"

says Shane. "I promoted the many walking, cycling, horse riding and wildlife watching opportunities that this stunning area has to offer. In particular I talked to journalists, travel writers and cyclists about the new Wheels to the Wild Cycle Route - a 3-day short break that we are launching in 2007."

Created by the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act of 1949,

Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty are just that! They contain some of our finest landscapes and countryside and are home to some of our most exquisite and unusual wildlife species. AONBs are diverse in character: areas of lowland heath; upland mountains; gently rolling hills; coastal plains and shingle beaches; each containing unique and fascinating landscape features.

A nationwide programme of AONB events is available on the NAAONB website www.visitaonb.org.uk For more information on the North Pennines visit www.northpennines.org.uk or call 011388 528801 and request a copy of the North Pennines AONB 2007 Visitor Guide

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KYNP SPREADS WINGS

Know Your North Pennines (KYNP), the highly successful training programme for people working in the tourism industry, has struck up a partnership with Northumberland College and the Centre of Vocational Excellence (COVE).

This new partnership means that students on the course will now receive a level 2 certification from the college in recognition of their work. It is also a 'pat on the back' for the Steering Group and Pam Forbes, the co-ordinator for Know Your North Pennines, who ensure that the quality of the training is consistently high.

The Know Your North Pennines programme provides people who meet the visitors to the area face-to-face with knowledge about all the things that make the North Pennines special. For instance, during winter 2007/08 they have learned about geology and mining, Methodism and chapels and about the musical tradition of the area.

Pru Kitching, Chair of the Steering Group, and Weardale writer said: "I am really pleased that Northumberland College is giving Know Your North Pennines the recognition we have always felt it deserves. This also allows us to help roll-out the idea to other areas in the North East Region."

The Steering Group has already had discussions with the County Durham Tourism Partnership about helping to create a 'Know Your Durham City' initiative and in North Northumberland the Northumberland National Park Authority and the Northumberland Coast AONB Partnership are picking up the idea in slightly amended form.

Know Your North Pennines has received funding from the North Pennines AONB Sustainable Development Fund,

LEADER+ and the County Durham Tourism Partnership.



Lindsay Waddell (left), Head Keeper with Raby Estates, explains moorland management on a recent KYNP training day © Ian Forbes

Contact Pam Forbes, Know Your North Pennines Co-ordinator, on 01388 517365 (pampeathill@tiscali.co.uk) for more details

LANDSCAPE ARCHAEOLOGY PROJECT

An exciting and innovative landscape archaeology project within the AONB is currently being designed by Stewart Ainsworth of English Heritage.

The aim of the project will be to produce a thorough assessment of all archaeological remains within selected parts of the AONB, using the latest investigative techniques. The project will complement other initiatives being undertaken by the AONB Partnership through its Staff Unit.

The work is largely funded by English Heritage, as an expression of the accord between English Heritage and the National Association of AONBs, in partnership with other agencies and organisations such as the Ministry of Defence and British Geological Survey.

The overall objective will be to assist in the production of appropriate management strategies to inform the work of the AONB Partnership and to better



Muggleswick Grange © Nick Mason/North Pennines AONB Partnership

manage the area's rich archaeological resource. The project will incorporate current work at Scordale with work on Alston Moor in Cumbria, the Roman fort of Epiacum (Whitley Castle) in Northumberland and the monastic grange and deer park at Muggleswick in County Durham. This will comprise systematic analytical field survey at Whitley Castle and surrounding fieldscape, and surveys of the central part of Alston Moor and of Muggleswick Grange and associated Deer Park. The work will also include the use of Lidar and multi spectral imaging with conventional aerial photography.

The project, excluding work already under way at Scordale, is expected to start from September and is scheduled for completion in 2010.

For more information please contact Stewart Ainsworth, Senior Investigator with English Heritage, 01904 601936 (stewart.ainsworth@english-heritage.org.uk)

FROM WASTE TO WILD

Plans are underway by Northumbrian Water to restore a 9.5 hectare site within the North Pennines AONB to a mosaic of habitats in keeping with the surrounding area - including upland oak/ash woodland and moorland. The site was originally used for the disposal of sludge, generated as a by-product from

the water treatment works at Lartington. As the site is now at full capacity an innovative and specifically targeted restoration scheme has been proposed to enhance the wildlife value which will help Northumbrian Water meet its own and regional biodiversity targets.

The woodland creation phase of the

project has already started, in partnership with Trees from Cotherstone, a local community group, and Cotherstone Primary School. An event held during National Tree Planting Week in November enabled them to plant the first 105 trees and shrubs of what will be approximately 3 hectares of new native woodland. Local provenance species including oak, birch, rowan, hazel, hawthorn and juniper were planted by children from the primary school assisted by volunteers from Northumbrian Water and the Trees for Cotherstone group.

There will be a phased tree planting programme over several years to enable the continued involvement of volunteers from the Cotherstone area and children from the primary school. Creation of moorland habitat will start this year and should be completed within the next few years following the final restoration phase of the site. Species to be sown include sheep's fescue, heath bedstraw, tormentil, wavy hair-grass and heather.

For more information contact Stuart Pudney at Northumbrian Water on 0870 6084820

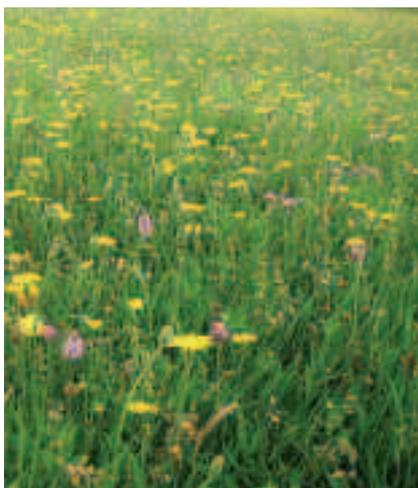


A pupil from Cotherstone Primary School helps plant trees at the Cotherstone site © Northumbrian Water

HAY TIME: THE FIRST YEAR

Hay Time is a three and a half year project that began in May 2006. The project, from the AONB Partnership, aims to restore and enhance at least 140ha of upland hay meadows within the AONB and to increase people's awareness, enjoyment and understanding of this special habitat.

Between May 2006 and May 2007 the project achievements have been: 198 fields surveyed; advice offered to 52 farmers; seed spread on 21.1ha (8 fields from 6 farms); all harvesting and spreading funded through agri-environment schemes; seed harvesting & spreading demonstration event; three technical workshops on hay meadow management; presentations at six events



A species rich hay meadow surveyed in Allendale last year © John O'Reilly/NPAP

for farmers; set of three management advice leaflets produced for farmers; presentations given to three local community groups; a simple identification guide to hay meadow flowers and grasses produced; a set of three leaflets with self-guided hay meadow walks in Allendale, Weardale and Baldersdale produced; and a research project undertaken into the cultural and land management history of North Pennines hay meadows.

For more information on Hay Time, please contact John O'Reilly, Hay Time Project Officer at the North Pennines AONB Partnership, on 01388 528801 (john@northpenninesaonb.org.uk)

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 natural beauty'. 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)

Simon has been supporting a number of community groups in developing publications and interpretation, with the assistance of AONB Partnership funding. In addition, he has been mentoring applications to the Sustainable Development Fund. Work to develop a Weardale Meat Mark and a woodland research project has also been undertaken. A recent trip to assess Trampers – all terrain buggies, in the Forest of Bowland AONB has been very useful in considering how to improve countryside access in the AONB for people with limited mobility.

NORTH (JOB SHARE)

• **Rebecca Barrett**
(rebecca@northpenninesaonb.org.uk)
and
• **Lesley Silvera**
(lesley@northpenninesaonb.org.uk)

Rebecca is mainly concerned at present with working on the development and implementation of the Hay Time project with John O'Reilly. She has also arranged a series of plant and bird events for the AONB's 2007 Events Programme and continues to support the work of local groups through the Small Grants Scheme. Lesley's main task has been to ensure that the dry stone walling apprenticeship scheme has been running to plan. The ten dry stone walling apprentices have worked in all conditions with their mentor wallers to gain experience. Hedgerow management, peatland conservation and woodland work is an additional part of the apprenticeship. The apprentices will be tested at level 1 drystone walling in May. She has also completed an access and interpretation audit of the Bowlees area in Upper Teesdale.

WEST

• **Chris Jones**
(cjones@northpenninesaonb.org.uk)

Much of Chris' time has been spent preparing the ground for the new Historic Environment Officer (page 6) and preparing for a seminar on North Pennine chapels. Other work has included compiling an important new guide on Tree Planting and Archaeology, with the assistance of the Historic Environment Working Group and the Forestry Commission. Chris has also been working closely with the Peatscapes project team to produce a leaflet on Peat and the Historic Environment.

Work continues to set up an AONB wide landscape archaeology project with English Heritage (see page 14), Chris has also provided advice and support to the establishment of the Upper Derwent Historical and Archaeological Society, a new community group based at Edmundbyers and surrounding parishes.

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

EVENTS, EVENTS, EVENTS!

The North Pennines AONB Partnership is organising two programmes of events and activities in 2007 to help local people and visitors discover the delights of the North Pennines Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and UNESCO European Geopark.

Northern Rocks 2007 Festival (19 May - 3 June)

This year will see the fourth annual Northern Rocks Festival of North Pennines Geology and Landscape. The two weeks are packed with over 40 events and activities to help local people and visitors discover the geological heritage and stunning landscapes of the North Pennines AONB and UNESCO European Geopark.

Geodiversity Officer Elizabeth Pickett

said, "There's a huge variety of exciting events and activities: join a guided walk and see the North Pennines through new eyes; spend a few days on a geological holiday; explore the underground world of old lead mines; have a go at dry stone walling; attend talks and exhibitions; join a fossil foray, drop in to High Force and make a spar box!"

Events Programme (7 April - 3 October)

This innovative mixture of 'Birdwalks', 'Rockwalks', 'Plantwalks' and 'Archaeology Walks' has been put together by the North Pennines AONB Partnership, in conjunction with a number of organisations and dedicated individuals. The programme of 35 events runs between Saturday 7 April and Wednesday 3 October.



Contact the AONB Partnership on 01388 528801 (info@northpenninesaonb.org.uk) for copies of the programmes and to find out more! PDF downloads of both programmes are also available in the 'Exploring the North Pennines Directory' on the North Pennines AONB website – www.northpennines.org.uk

NEWS IN BRIEF

Derwent Reservoir

A partnership between Northumbrian Water and Durham Wildlife Trust has led to the creation of a new Wetland Conservation Officer post to look after the wildlife around Derwent Reservoir. This two year post, fully funded by Northumbrian Water, will enable the maintenance and enhancement of species and habitats around the reservoir. Andy Mclay started his new role on 2 April and is looking forward to working with a wide range of people to ensure that the reservoir and surrounding land is managed to maximise benefits for wildlife. Anyone wishing to use the bird hide within the nature reserve should contact Andy at the Durham Wildlife Trust's Low Barns Office on 01388 488728.

Ramblings

The North Pennines AONB and European Geopark had a national airing in February 2007 when AONB Officer Chris Woodley-Stewart and Area Co-ordinator North Rebecca Barrett accompanied presenter Claire Balding on her Ramblings programme for Radio 4. The 'Rambling' in question was from Cauldron Snout to High Force and it



© Rebecca Barrett/North Pennines AONB Partnership

provided the opportunity to talk about many aspects of the spectacular wildlife and landscapes of Upper Teesdale. The BBC team so enjoyed the North Pennines that they'll be back to make two more programmes with the AONB Staff Unit and partners as part of their Open Country series.

Scordale Project

In July 2006 work began on a partnership project between English Heritage and the MoD to record the nationally important lead mining remains at Scordale. The scheduled monument which includes the mines, buildings, water management systems, hushes, trackways, tramways and dressing areas, is under threat of erosion from flash flooding episodes. The work is

being undertaken by Stewart Ainsworth and Abby Hunt, of English Heritage. To place the leadmining remains in context, a multi-period survey of the whole valley is being undertaken. The survey will be completed in 2008 and the results published in the English Heritage Research Reports Series.

Bid Submitted

The full Stage 2 application has been made to the Heritage Lottery Fund for the Living North Pennines project, an initiative of the North Pennines AONB Partnership. Eight organisations and community groups have worked together over the past year to conclude the development of this project which should lead to £3m of heritage conservation, education and access work in the North Pennines between late 2007 and 2010. Communities in Alston, Blanchland, Edmundbyers and Upper Teesdale have helped to design the project. The project includes: creation of 250ha of new native woodland at 15 sites; consolidation of four historic buildings and structures; community-led heritage interpretation and celebration; schools education projects; new access opportunities for walkers and horse riders in Teesdale, Derwentside and around Alston.