

Welcome!

to the first Nidderdale AONB Heritage Newsletter - aimed at celebrating local heritage through information sharing, events and activities. We hope you will enjoy the wide variety of topics covered and may be encouraged to join in with some of the volunteering activities and events.

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E. MOSS

About Nidderdale AONB

Nidderdale AONB is part of a family of protected areas that include National Parks in Britain as well as National Parks and nature reserves in many other countries throughout the world. Nidderdale AONB is a working landscape that has been shaped by centuries of human activity. The valley has been moulded by a rich land use history that embraces agriculture, mining, quarrying, textiles and water provision.

The varied landscape has created diverse habitats, which support a wide range of flora and fauna of national and international importance. It is also a rich and complex historic environment with a wealth of medieval landscape features still visible in the more recent legacy of the AONB's industrial past. Learn more about Nidderdale AONB at www.nidderdaleaonb.org.uk

About AONBs

In Britain during the early 1900s there was an increasing level of concern that the lives of working people in industrial cities should be improved by providing more fruitful use of leisure time and access to the countryside for clean, fresh air. By the 1930s more and more people were seeking an escape from the dirt and noise of Britain's towns and cities and this began to cause growing conflict with landowners.

In the late 1940s it was decided that the nation's finest landscapes should be safeguarded so that future generations would be able to enjoy them. The result was the 'National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949' which led to the creation of Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs) and National Parks and also gave powers to strengthen a public rights of way network including the creation of long distance routes. Since the Act was passed 49 AONBs and 15 National Parks have been designated in the UK.

The primary purpose of an AONB is to conserve and enhance the area's natural beauty. Social and economic development that contributes to the natural beauty of the AONB is encouraged and the management of recreation tourism improved.

WASHBURN HERITAGE CENTRE

After nearly 6 years in the planning, the Washburn Heritage Centre at St Michael and St Lawrence Church, Fewston finally opens its doors.



Building on the central role, which the church has always played in the community, the Heritage Centre has been developed by Fewston with Blubberhouses Parochial Church Council to preserve and promote the unique heritage of the Washburn Valley, and to benefit both local people and the many visitors to the area.



The church at Fewston.

Over the years the Washburn Heritage Centre project has benefited from support, either financial or in kind, from a wide range of organisations. It would have been difficult to get started without the support of Nidderdale Plus and the Diocese of Bradford. The biggest source of funding for the Heritage Centre has been the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF), with grants also from Yorkshire Dales LEADER, and many others. Yorkshire Water has been extremely helpful, especially by creating a new path from the Swinsty



The entrance courtyard to the Heritage Centre.

reservoir path up through the woods to the Heritage centre so that it is very accessible from the Stack Point car park. Local fundraising achieved nearly £60,000, a huge amount for a very small community.

Apart from fundraising, a great many local people have become involved in developing the activities of the Centre, based on the Interpretation Plan that was an essential part of the HLF application.

Building the Heritage Centre in the churchyard involved an archaeological excavation of the area affected (see John Buglass's article on the following pages).

The Heritage Centre was skillfully designed by Pearce Bottomley Architects of Aberford to nestle into the slope of the churchyard, giving level access into the church for the first time. It will house temporary exhibitions each for two months, illustrating six heritage themes – landscape and nature, agriculture, inspiration, architecture, industry, and the churches of the Washburn Valley. During each two month period there will be a range of events and activities relating to the heritage theme. The newly decorated church has permanent exhibitions about the church, the reservoirs and the valley.

The Centre's programme began in March, and the Centre and its tearoom will be open on Sundays and Bank Holidays all year, and on Saturdays from April to October. Trained volunteer Heritage Wardens will be on hand to greet visitors and provide information. The Centre will also be open at other times for special events – see the website for details at www.washburnvalley.org

Archaeological investigation

Between October 2008 and April 2010 archaeological investigations took place to help in the placing of a new building north-west of St Lawrence's Church, Fewston, as part of the development of the Washburn Heritage Centre.

Fewston is first recorded in the Domesday Book (1086) as Fostune from the Old Scandinavian personal name and the Old English tun meaning 'farmstead of a man called Fotr' or 'Foot's Farmstead'. The occurrence of Old Scandinavian (used in the 8-12th centuries) in the name suggests a possible pre-Conquest origin for the settlement. For most of the settlement's history it has been an agriculturally-based community. Its size and importance increased in the 18th century with the development of the nearby mill, only to decline in the 19th century to the small, dispersed settlement seen today. The oldest surviving part of the church is its 14th century tower, the main body having been rebuilt in the 17th century following a fire.

Results of the investigations recorded 163 human burials, elements of medieval grave slabs, parts of the medieval belfry and evidence for earlier human activity.

Of the 163 sets of remains, 155 represented discrete burials, of which 99 had been interred in coffins. 80 of the coffins had handles (two with lettering in the backing plates - one with the words 'God is Love' (Plate 1) and the other the letters 'IHS'. A third plate had the image of a weeping angle or cherub) and many others had additional forms of decoration. Unusually, three coffins had glass plates which would have



Plate 1

allowed the occupant to be viewed prior to interment. The majority of the coffins had almost completely decayed, with the exception of that of Richard Gill whose coffin (Plate 2) (along with his wig and socks) had become waterlogged and was still intact.



Plate 2

Only the 64 most complete skeletons were fully analysed and this revealed that the burials comprised an even number of, predominantly mature, male and female adults. A third of the population was non-adults, with a high proportion of adolescents whilst neonates and infants were under-represented. The males were taller than average for the period (George Lister was the tallest at 6'2") whilst the females were of average height. Evidence for childhood stress was found in the form of enamel defects in the teeth and healed childhood rickets. At least one infant (Romand Marjerrison, 10 months old) had been suffering from scurvy. Infectious disease was common, including inflammatory changes to the legs and respiratory infections (both lung infections and sinusitis).

Over half the male adults had suffered traumatic injuries, including fractures (George Lister had a broken nose), soft tissue injuries, and a healed blade injury. One female had



fractured a vertebra in her neck. The amount and type of joint disease was consistent with a generally older population and the spine, hips and jaws were particularly affected. Joint disease was more common among the males, and different patterns of joint involvement between the sexes were observed. Some evidence was found for the wearing of corsets in five females and pipe-smoking. At least one male had probably suffered from Paget's disease (James Dibb) and his wife had probably been autopsied (Elizabeth Dibb both died in the 18th century) (Plate 3).



Plate 3

Dental health was poor, with high levels of tooth decay and antemortem tooth loss, consistent with the consumption of a diet high in refined sugars and processed carbohydrates.

As would be expected some of the graves contained items that had been buried with the deceased. The commonest item was pins that had been used to secure shrouds or winding sheets. The presence of clothing on some of the bodies could

be seen in the recovery of buttons (metal, ceramic and bone), belts and braces, buckles and possible mother of pearl boot buttons. A small collection of jewellery was found which included a possible pair of copper alloy brooches, two copper alloy and two gold finger rings. The latter rings are the engagement and wedding bands of Grace Hutton. A George III silver half crown was found with the man who had suffered the blade injury to the back of his head.

A range of material was recovered from the grave backfills not associated with the burials. The commonest was pottery fragments which ranged from Roman to early 20th century. The Roman pottery was a single sherd from which little can be inferred apart from the fact that there was Roman activity in the vicinity. A modest assemblage of 12-14th century domestic pottery indicates the close proximity of the settlement to the church – most probably in the car park to the west. The recovery of a piece of struck flint extends human activity in the area back into the prehistoric period.

25 fragments of re-used architectural/ecclesiastical stone were recorded. Six stones appear to be the remains of part of openings in (?12-14th century) belfry. The oblique grooves cut into one or both of the sides of the stones would have held wooden louvers allowing the sound of the bells out but preventing rain from getting in. Two of the stones were hexagonal pillars with grooves



Plate 4

on opposite sides showing that they came from the centre of the opening (Plate 4). There were also fragments of two different pillars, a window and a possible piscina.

Fragments of 13 12-16th century gravestones were identified. All the stones had the remains of part of a cross-carved into them whilst one of them had what appears to be the round pommel of a sword (Plate 5).



Plate 5

The symbolism of the sword is uncertain, the most likely interpretation is that it denotes a male and the possibility that he had the right to bear arms. The sword in this case was to the right of the cross which possibly indicates a left-handed person as the weapon would be on the right hand side of a supine body.

Two of the medieval grave slabs had been cut in half and re-used to form the sides of the chest tomb of John Brerey (1613). The western and southern sides are the two halves of one stone whilst the northern and eastern are the other. The style of the step of the base dates one of the slabs to the 12th century.

My thanks are extended to:

The Washburn Heritage Group for inviting me to undertake the project;

The various members of the group who volunteered to help dig some of the graves;

Dr Mike McCarthy, the archaeological advisor to the diocese for the pottery report.

Thanks also go to all the students and volunteers from the Universities of Bradford and York osteology and forensic archaeology courses who, along with various members of 3D Archaeological Society of Harrogate, all helped with the excavation of the human remains.

Source: John Buglass Archaeological Services

Heritage events reviews



Aislabie Gardens Tour

The 16th October dawned with showers of rain; the sun emerged briefly as the group of 21 assembled for a guided tour of Studley Royal Water Gardens and Hackfall. Dr Keith Jones, an experienced volunteer guide for the National Trust, led the group

around the deer park to the site where Studley Hall had once stood and gave us a brief history of the Aislabie family.

After admiring the architecture of the stable block (the only remaining building) and the views of

Ripon Cathedral down the main drive, he took the group to the spot believed to be where John Aislabie had planned to build a new house, overlooking the lake (which has recently been restored to appear as it had in the 18th century).

Keith led the group through the Water Gardens created by John Aislabie, from the Moon Pond, then up the path to the Serpentine Tunnel and the Octagon Tower, pointing out statuary and temples en-route. The walk along the High Ride took in the fine views from the Temple of Fame and Anne Boleyn's Seat and Surprise View (the Surprise is the iconic view of Fountains Abbey).

After photo opportunities to record Tent Hill and the Abbey, the group proceeded down to the Temple of Piety and over the Rustic Bridge, where Keith explained how the water was channeled through the gardens.

In the afternoon the group was taken by a fleet of minibuses on a route to William Aislabie's garden at Hackfall, which passed some of the land features that Aislabies' visitors might have observed in the 18th century.

We were met at Hackfall by Paul Mosley, the Woodland Trust's Hackfall Officer, and Bill Barber, one of the National Trust's experienced volunteers with a serious research interest in Hackfall. Paul

first led the way to the Ruin, now a Landmark Trust holiday cottage. There were spectacular views of the Vale of Mowbray to the East, and we were fortunate to see the restored fountain in action down below, which was also a highlight for visitors in William Aislabie's time.

We then retraced steps to go down to Fountain Pond and the Rustic Temple, where once more the fountain performed well,

as it had for visitors 250 years ago. A short walk brought us to the Grotto, now restored and with a view of the Forty Foot Fall, and on to Fisher's Hall with each of its gothic windows and views to the river. Bill and Paul gave entertaining insights to all the follies, their locations, viewpoints, and the restoration of views between the follies based on well illustrated by contemporary engravings. Paul also told us about the efforts made to preserve

the ecology of this Site of Special Scientific Interest, and the difficulties this presented to the restoration work.

The last leg of our ramble was the steady climb to Alum Spring and Kent's Seat, to appreciate the formation of tufa rock (a form of calcareous rock often used for arches), covered by mosses and ferns.

After continuing up the valley alongside

the waterfalls of Grewelthorpe Beck we arrived at the restored Top Pond. A short walk took us up to the minibuses, and after tea and scones at the Crown Inn, we returned to Studley car park. Thanks are due to Alison Brayshaw for allowing access to her grounds during the tour of Hackfall.

John Barker, Historic Parks and Gardens Study Group

Heritage Forum

On a rather wet day in October, over 90 delegates filled the Millennium Hall in Kettlewell for a range of fascinating talks - from the archaeological discoveries at Fewston Graveyard, to the history of Studley Royal as a tourist attraction.

In the afternoon workshops on traditional farm buildings of Nidderdale and researching family history

took place, and a dedicated few braved the inclement weather to explore the scheduled monuments around Beaver Dyke Reservoir, including John of Gaunt's Castle, with Archaeologist John Buglass. Articles in this edition of the newsletter cover many of the topics discussed at the Heritage Forum.

Heritage sites updates....

Water wheel restored



The Darley Mill water wheel is turning again for the first time in many years following a £100,000 renovation scheme by new owners, The Yorkshire Linen Co.

The 27ft wheel was manufactured locally by J Todd of Summerbridge in 1874 and last turned in 2004, since when it had fallen into disrepair.

Restoration took 11 months and the expertise of Bentham based company Northern Millwrights. Extensive work included removing and replacing rotten transoms and buckets, lifting, levelling and aligning the wheel, and dredging 2000 tonnes of silt from the mill race.

The day of testing was a tense moment, but to see the water run down and turn the wheel was poignant and exhilarating for all involved.

Darley has a rich heritage of water mills and Darley Mill was one of eight manorial mills in the village. It was built in the 17th century on the banks of Darley Beck and the Miller's cottage and walled garden were added in 1761.

There is a long history of local people working at the Mill and some of the current employees come from families that have lived in Nidderdale for generations. As well as offering a window into the region's industrial past, the Darley Mill Centre now has three retail floors and a licensed restaurant/tearoom.



The newly restored water wheel.

National Trust Fountains Abbey and Studley Royal



Ian Gilkinson

Studley Royal including the ruins of Fountains Abbey World Heritage Site – defining outstanding universal value

Fountains Abbey & Studley Royal was internationally recognised as a World Heritage Site in 1986 by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation. Since 2007, UNESCO has asked all World Heritage Sites to provide a 'Statement of Outstanding Universal Value' (SOUV) as part of the nomination process.

Along with many other sites across the world inscribed before 2007, including the Taj Mahal in India and the Great Wall of China, Fountains Abbey must now retrospectively produce an SOUV. This document will provide a crucial reference for those making decisions on how best to manage the World Heritage Site and look after the very special features which qualify it to appear on the World Heritage List.

The title of the estate on the World Heritage list is 'Studley Royal Park, including the ruins of Fountains Abbey', which better reflects the 18th century Water Garden's importance as a masterpiece of human creative genius, and an outstanding example of a landscape which illustrates a significant stage in human history.

The estate consulted closely with the local community when revising their latest World Heritage Site Management Plan and from the response it was clear that Fountains Abbey is important to very many people for a wide range of reasons. Following public consultation on our website the draft SOUV was submitted to the World Heritage Committee for approval in February 2011.

Launch of the Fountains Abbey and Studley Royal WHS Management Plan 2009-2014

The Plan was launched on the 29th September 2010 and is now available at www.fountainsabbey.org.uk Many of our key partners in the delivery of the Plan attended the launch including English Heritage, Natural England, the local Parish Councils, Harrogate Borough Council and the Nidderdale AONB. It was a great opportunity to remind everyone about the Plan and to get them excited about the current and future projects taking place on the estate. The key priorities set out in the Plan include the restoration of the garden and parkland, preparing and delivering a Conservation Management Plan for the property, protecting the setting of the World Heritage Site through creation of a buffer zone, water management and adapting to climate change, promoting sustainable management, improving environmental performance and engaging with people.

The lake project

The most ambitious conservation project ever to have taken place at Fountains Abbey & Studley Royal is now complete. The silt island that had become an unwanted feature in the lake since the end of the 19th century has now been removed revealing wonderful views in and out of the Water Garden and turning the lake into a mirror pool to the sky, just as its designer John Aislabie intended. John Aislabie created a formal landscape with classical statues and follies to delight his Georgian visitors. Esteemed guests would have travelled to the estate by carriage, and the inviting view across the lake into the water garden would have given a glimpse of the wonders in store. For the first time in over 150 years this view has been restored, so that modern day visitors can see the lake just as an 18th century tourist would have done.

While the lake was drained it was possible to record the 18th century boathouses for the first time which gave greater insights into how the Pleasure Grounds had been used in their heyday.

Spot the sphinxes

The pair of sphinx statues at Studley Royal have moved about quite a bit since the 18th century. This was not unusual in gardens of large estates and we've found evidence that many of the well-known statues in the ponds at Studley have enjoyed a variety of locations around the estate throughout the years.

Photographs from the 1960s show the sphinxes on top of the Mackershaw lodges in the deer park, but we know that this was not their original location. When the National Trust bought the Fountains estate in 1983 the sphinxes were discovered in poor repair in the builders' yard along with many other damaged statues.

World renowned stone mason Tim Lees has repaired the damaged sphinxes which are now ready to be re-instated into the gardens after so many years of absence. Tim is an Associate Member of the Royal British Sculptors and is an elected member of the Master Carvers Association.

Our plan is to move the statues back to their intended position on the Drum Fall in the Water Garden. You'll be able to look out for them from Easter 2011.

Hackfall Wood



E Moss

Less than 10 miles away from Ripon, and just south of Masham near the village of Grewelthorpe, Hackfall is a great place to visit to get away from it all and for quality time with friends and family. Hackfall is situated on the edge of the beautiful Yorkshire Dales within the Nidderdale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. It covers 47 hectares (117 acres) of ancient semi-natural woodland within a steep rocky gorge of the River Ure.

Historic Hackfall - an inspirational landscape

Hackfall also became famous as a tourist destination during the European Tour: typically undertaken by rich young men in the 18th century. Images of Hackfall even made their way onto a dinner service bought from Wedgwood by Catherine the Great of Russia.

Painters and poets, including Turner himself, visited Hackfall for inspiration during the North Yorkshire stage of their tour of Britain. Much of what we know about Hackfall today comes from their various diary notes, sketches and completed works. Hackfall is featured on 'The Turner Trail' - there is a bench by Sandbed Hut at one of the sites from which Turner sketched (see www.yorkshire.com/turner/trails/hackfall-woods).

The wood was bought by the Aislabie family in 1731, and was later developed as a fashionable



E Moss

picturesque woodland garden by William Aislabie. In contrast to the family's formal water gardens at Studley Royal and Fountain's Abbey, Hackfall celebrates the beauty of nature 'idealised' through the careful placement of follies, ponds and cascades as eyecatchers in a series of views to be discovered during a tour of the site.

The ancient woodland site is a Site of Special Scientific Interest, because it is home to a wide variety of birds, plants, insects and other invertebrates. The largely broadleaved woodland area is still dominated by oak with beech, sycamore, ash and even lime originating from the 18th century

Restoration

In 2006 the Woodland Trust and Hackfall Trust were successful in securing a Heritage Lottery Fund grant of almost £1million to restore key features and enable people to learn about and enjoy this fantastic site.

During much of the 20th century the site was left to fall into ruin, however the Woodland Trust, working with the Hackfall Trust and Landmark Trust, has spent much of the last 20 years restoring the site to its former glories. Today, Hackfall's site managers have to strike a careful balance between restoring the historic garden features and conserving the SSSI's delicate woodland habitats. The garden has therefore undergone a 'partial restoration' so that key features can be discovered, but these remain in a natural undisturbed woodland setting.

After much hard work and planning in 2010 by the Woodland and Hackfall Trusts, a magnificent fountain (originally created in the 18th century) once again graces Hackfall - delighting visitors as much today as it doubtless did almost 200 years ago. The fountain at the pond was originally created in 1756 as part of William Aislabie's master plan for Hackfall. The original fountain with elm pipework (found during the restoration work) had stopped working in the early 1800s. The fountain has now been restored using modern pipe work and a gravity fed system filled from a natural spring on the hillside above. Once a certain water level is achieved in the system, a tumbler opens a valve and water flows to the fountain (roughly every 10-20 minutes). 2010 also saw the restoration of the stone / tufa archway at the Grotto with its magnificent view of the Forty Foot Fall. A recent Hackfall Volunteers task involved clearing vegetation blocking the waterfall, enabling the full view of the waterfall to be seen again.

Hackfall walks, family adventure maps and education materials.

A great deal of time and effort has been spent on creating a unique experience for the visitor. There are four separate walk routes around the site, from a brief 30 minute stroll to

a more intense three hour ramble. All are detailed on a special walks map available online, onsite, at the Masham Community Office or from the Crown Inn, Grewelthorpe.

For the more adventurous visitor there is a wonderful walk from Masham to Hackfall along the River Ure passing the Historic Nutwith Cote Farm with its Stable, Dove Cote and Bee Boles along the way. (download a copy of the route from www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/en/our-woods/visiting/walks/Documents/broadleaf-74.pdf).

Hackfall is open all year round, free to the public and you can even pop to the nearby Crown Inn at Grewelthorpe – something of an adopted home for walkers - for a well earned bite to eat afterwards!

For further information visit www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/hackfall

For information on volunteering, events or to arrange a school visit, please email paulmosley@woodlandtrust.org.uk or phone him on 0845 293 5847.

The recent restoration work was funded by a grant of almost £1 million from the Heritage Lottery Fund and further grants from the Nidderdale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, Yorventure and the North Yorkshire Aggregates Grant Scheme.

Notes for visitors:

Parking for around 12 cars is available at the Woodland Trust Car Park on the Masham to Grewelthorpe Road, and at the Crown Inn, Grewelthorpe.

Public Transport: Little Red Bus - service 138.

There are also longer walks along the River Ure from Masham – leaflets available at the Masham Community Office. Website: www.visitmasham.com/walks

The paths at Hackfall are steep and can be muddy, so please wear suitable clothing/footwear.

Updates from Local Heritage Groups

Community archaeologist, Kev Cale, reports on updates from heritage groups (www.communityarchaeology.co.uk)

Nidderdale Chase Heritage Group

Following on from the study of High and Low Bishopside, the group's second area of study is the Sigsworth Estate land between Wath and Coville within the civil parish of Fountains Earth. The same methodology is being applied to fieldwork identifying and recording all heritage items. This is complemented by desktop work taking the group to local and national record offices. This study has been made possible by the generosity of Mr Tom Wheelwright and the financial support of the Heritage Lottery Fund. We are sorry to report the death of John Cardozo, the group's treasurer and long time member who died suddenly on 1 January. We will miss his support, wisdom and company.

Pott and Agill Study Group

Members of the group have been involved in three studies:

Research into, "Masham's Lost Cemetery" - a booklet entitled "Beneath your Feet" launched at a community event at Masham Town Hall on Saturday 12 March;

A small team continues to reconnoitre the Burn Valley stretching from Masham up to the head of Colsterdale with a view of indentifying and recording the heritage of this beautiful landscape. This has been complemented by desk-based studies drawing on evidence from maps and aerial photographs; and

All members have been regularly visiting NYCC NYCRO where they are working closely with staff indexing the Swinton papers. This vast archive is revealing a wealth of historical material on Mashamshire.

Ilton Heritage Group

The group has concluded a number of years' funded research on Ilton and its immediate surroundings. A snapshot of their work to date, designed to introduce residents to aspects of Ilton's heritage ranging from prehistory to the telephone kiosk, can be found at www.iltonheritage.co.uk The group is taking a well earned rest before deciding on its next project - but is exploring different ways of recording the heritage stories it has discovered over the last five years through drama and film. Members are investigating a new (to Ilton) way of discovering more about Ilton's history through excavation. If anyone is interested, and not just those who live in the Ilton area, contact Jenny Bellamy for more details at cft-jbellamy@supanet.com

Hartwith Heritage Group

The group is looking at the industrial landscape of Hartwith-cum-Winsley parish. Over the past year it has been researching and visiting local textile mills, both extant mill conversions and the sites of former mills. A great deal of work has been done to pull together previously unaccessed documentation concerning people and families - both owners and workers - connected with the industrial complexes, which complements what the buildings alone can tell. The study has three threads: the mill buildings, the process mechanisms, and the people involved. Research is now broadening to encompass the tanning and stone industries.

Iron Age (Nidderdale) Community Archaeology Project

The group continues to investigate and excavate evidence of late prehistoric and medieval iron manufacturing in Dacre. Recent work focussed on excavation of Iron Age bowl furnaces. This group has also supported and worked alongside other community groups in the area including Nidderdale Chase Heritage Group. More collaboration is hoped for in the summer to undertake excavation of an ancient metal working site near Wath. Years of uncovering thought-provoking evidence has made the Iron Age group eager to try the elementary process of metal working themselves by building and firing a furnace with the objective of turning ore to iron. Further information at www.iron-age.org

In addition, the group is developing a second project to deal with the many features being discovered that lie outside the remit of the existing project. The project is called 'Prehistoric Nidderdale' and a website is in preparation. Although it is not yet fully operational, it can be seen at <http://prehistoric-nidderdale.org>

Forthcoming Events for Iron Age (Nidderdale) Community Archaeology Project

Monday 18 July 2011 - 6.30pm Presentation at Pateley Bridge as part of the Nidderdale AONB Event Programme.

Monday 10 October 2011 - 7.30pm Presentation at Grassington for the Upper Wharfedale Field Society.

Up and coming volunteering projects



Traditional farm buildings recording project

In this project you'll learn about the historic buildings in Nidderdale and get a thorough understanding of farm buildings and their landscapes.

A number of traditional farm buildings have already been recorded through individual survey projects, by local history groups, and other organisations. The project aims to fill the gaps and document the entire collection of traditional farm buildings in the Nidderdale in the next two years.

Historic building consultant Jen Deadman will lead volunteers, providing training on identifying historic farm buildings, and support through the survey. Jen has a wealth of experience surveying farm buildings in Nidderdale.

It is hoped that the information gained will be of interest to landowners, tenants and local communities now and in the future

Whether you are a potential volunteer, an owner of a farm building or just interested, please email sally.childes@harrogate.gov.uk or call the AONB office on 01423 712950 for more information.

Historic Hay Meadows

From the car park at Thruscross Reservoir look east, across the dam, and you will see Mr Murgtroyd's hay meadows. In June and July you can't miss them because they are full of yellow rattle, cowslips, red clover, meadow cranesbill, pignut, sorrel and meadow buttercups; a glorious patchwork of colour. Listen, and you will hear curlew, their magical song bubbling over the meadows. If you were to step into the meadows you would find butterflies - orange tips, meadow browns and gatekeepers; chimney sweep moths and bumblebees amongst the flowers.



T Bunnay

Step back in time 100 years, 200 years, 300 years ago and the scene at Banks Farm would remain the same. Tractors, mowers and bales have replaced horses, scythes and hay stooks, and most of the field barns once used to store the haycrop from the farm are now remnants in field walls or have been converted into houses. But the essential management has remained constant; the meadows are lightly grazed in the spring then closed up from the livestock and allowed to grow long, flower and set seed before they are cut for hay in late summer. This unchanging management is one of the reasons why these meadows have such a diversity of plants.

100 years ago meadows like Mr Murgtroyd's were commonplace and unremarkable; every farmer needed a crop of hay to feed his sheep and cattle through the winter and every farm had meadows to produce this crop.

50 years ago, Thruscross Reservoir was built. At the same time as the hamlet of West End and the medieval field patterns surrounding it were flooded to provide water for Leeds, the area's meadows were being lost too. The replacement of silage for hay, heavily fertilised, cut earlier and often cropped twice or more every year, allowed farmers to avoid the time consuming job of hay making, which needs a week of dry weather to make good hay, and enabled them

to produce a much bigger crop from their fields. Thousands of hectares of meadows have been reseeded and fertilised, the flower rich swards replaced with more productive and reliable ryegrass and white clover silage fields. And meadows have become the rare, treasured habitats that they are today.

Silage fields have revolutionised hill farming and without them there surely would be far fewer farming families able to make a living from the small farms that populate the Washburn Valley and Nidderdale. However, the much reduced range of plants do not provide the homes for invertebrates and the earlier cutting dates prevent meadowland birds such as the curlew from raising their broods. Indeed, 100 years ago, the rasping call of the corncrake was a familiar sound in these meadows. The wholesale change from hay to silage has meant that the corncrake has been lost from most of the British mainland and you will have to travel to the Outer Hebrides or Western Ireland to hear its once common call.

Nidderdale AONB is working with the conservation agency, Natural England, to protect the remaining meadows in the AONB and enhance their management. It is also possible to restore some meadows. Further up the valley at West End, Geoff Peel remembers his father's meadows full of flowers. They have been improved and had lost their wildflower interest but Geoff is now working to increase the floral diversity. This is a labour intensive and unpredictable task which will involve taking flower seed from nearby meadows such as those at Banks Farm and spreading them on Geoff's fields. With suitable mowing and grazing practices, flower seed should germinate and grow producing a mix of plants characteristic of this area's floral heritage.

Are you interested in protecting the AONB's hay meadow heritage? The AONB and Natural England

are looking for volunteers who can help survey meadows this summer to identify our most valuable sites, sites suitable to harvest seed from and sites suitable to restore. We will be offering training to volunteers so that they can help to carry out this rewarding and valuable work. We

would also love to hear about your memories of hay timing in years past.

To get involved please contact the AONB Office on 01423 712950 or nidderdaleaonb@harrogate.gov.uk

To find out more, a book entitled 'Hay Time in the Yorkshire Dales' is

available to buy from the Yorkshire Dales Millennium Trust at www.ydmt.org.uk

Marjorie Davy, Natural England

Regular volunteering opportunities



AONB

Veteran Tree Survey

Gnarled and knobbly; often stout, bent and hollow; ancient trees are markers in the landscape. At times they are valued, prominent features in the middle of a village or remnants of ancient deer parks incorporated into landscaped grounds. At other times they can be forgotten relics on old boundaries, or hidden away in inaccessible little valleys. They can sometimes give clues to former land-use or industries and some species, especially oak and yew, may be up to 1,000 years old.

A survey collecting data on the veteran trees within the Nidderdale AONB has been on-going since 2005. We now have a database with records and photos of some 760 trees. Members of the Tree Warden group have been carrying out this recording work and the aim is to make this as broad a cross-section of landscape types and species of tree as possible. The information can be kept "hidden" and out of the public domain should a land-owner prefer, but most are happy to allow these records to be included on the Woodland Trust's "Ancient Tree Hunt" website.

If you know of an interesting old tree within the Nidderdale AONB, please get in touch with annstark@btinternet.com

Nidderdale AONB Conservation Volunteers

The Nidderdale Conservation Volunteers (NCV's) are a friendly bunch who enjoy being out in the countryside and doing practical conservation work in the AONB.

The activities directly benefit nature conservation and landscape quality, as well as assisting public enjoyment of the countryside. The programme includes tasks such as footpath repair, pond restoration, woodland management, scrub clearance, fencing, and waymarking in locations throughout the AONB. No experience is necessary as we provide the tools and training.

The Conservation Volunteers meet every Tuesday. You can contact Colin Slator on 07525 988212 (Monday & Tuesday). Alternatively you can contact the AONB office on 01423 712950 or email nidderdaleaonb@harrogate.gov.uk

Hackfall Volunteers

This group meets regularly carrying out footpath maintenance work, dry stone walling etc. Contact Paul Mosley, the Hackfall Officer, on 0845 293 5847 or email paulmosley@woodlandtrust.org.uk



E Moss

Nidderdale AONB Walling Group

The group meets every Wednesday and, with a growing membership, a diverse range of projects are being tackled at sites in and around Nidderdale AONB. To find out more about joining the group contact secretary Emma Walker-Palin on 01423 715994.

Office help required!

We would love to hear from anyone who has a day, half a day, or even just a couple of hours a week to spare to help out in the AONB office - from inputting heritage research data to tweeting current news! Please email nidderdaleaonb@harrogate.gov.uk or call 01423 712950 to discuss.

Heritage Events

Heritage Forum

Plans are afoot for the 2011 Nidderdale Heritage Forum, which will be held on Saturday 1 October in Darley Memorial Hall. Please email nidderdaleaonb@harrogate.gov.uk or call 01423 712950 for details on attending or to get involved.

Festival of British Archaeology

This year the AONB will be taking part in the Festival of British Archaeology, coordinated by the Council for British Archaeology (CBA) between the 16 and 31 July. The events organised in Nidderdale AONB include:

Sun 17 July - Rock Art walk

Mon 18 July - Prehistoric Nidderdale talk

Sat 24 July - John of Gaunt's Castle walk

Sun 25 July - Gouthwaite Lodge Farm

Event details will be updated on the AONB website www.nidderdaleaonb.org.uk, or for other events in the area view the CBA website at www.archaeologyfestival.org.uk which is dedicated to the festival.

Heritage Open Days

As part of the national celebration of heritage, events were organised in the AONB in 2010 to open up sites normally not open to the public, or to open visitor attractions free of charge: Nidderdale Museum welcomed over 40 visitors; the Witch of the Woods 16th century cottage, welcomed walkers from Galphay and further afield; and several visitors to Swinton Park were guided by Val Hepworth from the Yorkshire Gardens Trust.

Do you own an historic site? Would you be prepared to open the doors for heritage open days 2011? If so, please email sally.childes@harrogate.gov.uk or call 01423 712950. We would also love to hear from anyone interested in volunteering to help with heritage events in forthcoming years.

In 2011 the national Heritage Open Days event will run from Thursday 8 - Sunday 11 September.

World Heritage Weekend

Join the National Trust for a wide range of interesting and memorable events at Fountains Abbey & Studley Royal: full details are on www.fountainsabbey.org.uk Keep a lookout for details of their World Heritage Weekend on the 16 - 17 April 2011.

Heritage skills training

New training and volunteer base at Beverley Park

The AONB have worked with the Beverley Outdoor Centre to lease Beverley Hall's former carriage house - it will provide a base for AONB Conservation Volunteers who meet every Tuesday and for heritage skills training.

Meeting room for hire at Council Offices, Pateley Bridge

The meeting room facilities at the Council Offices in Pateley Bridge, where the AONB is based, have been enhanced with a new SMART Board. This interactive whiteboard lets you view electronic resources, write notes, annotate in digital ink and give presentations - all with the simple touch of a finger. If you would like to book the meeting room, and are interested in being trained to use the SMART Board, please contact the AONB office.

Gain/improve heritage skills with free training events!

The North of England Civic Trust is organising heritage skills training events for contractors, homeowners, students and residents of the AONB. Events range from a day for owners of historic buildings, principles of conservation, lime mortars and plasters, dry stone walling, and sash windows. Confirmed dates are:

Principles of Conservation - Tuesday 19 July 2011 5.30-7.30pm

Lime mortars and plasters - Friday 12 August 2011 9.30am-4pm

Homeowners - Saturday 8 October 2011 10am-4pm

The courses are open to all - homeowners, contractors, students and interested local residents. The events are free for those people living the Yorkshire Dales LEADER area (includes the AONB), there will be a small charge for those living outside. Please register your interest by emailing nidderdaleaonb@harrogate.gov.uk

National Heritage Training Group (Yorks & Humber) News for construction professionals and contractors

Research by the National Heritage Training Group (NHTG) in 2008 highlighted serious skills and knowledge gaps affecting the craftspeople and building professionals who work on pre-1919 buildings in Yorkshire. Although the numbers of craftspeople qualified to work on traditional buildings using sympathetic materials is slowly increasing, there is still a skills shortage that is impacting on the region's older buildings.

The impact of the shortage is most acute in areas like the AONB, where vernacular buildings contribute overwhelmingly to the landscape character of the area. As well as looking unsuitable, poor workmanship, inappropriate materials and modern interventions can alter a building's performance so that it is no longer able to breathe. This can lead to expensive problems such as damp.

To help plug this skills gap, Craven College in Skipton, the University of York and York College are offering subsidised courses aimed at building construction craftspeople and professionals. The subsidy, which is available for a limited period to eligible companies in North, East and West Yorkshire, is supported by the Train to Gain Enhancement Fund. For more information please visit www.getyourheritagetraining.co.uk or contact the Project Coordinator, Bess Martin on 01756 708934 or emartin@craven-college.ac.uk

Round up of Nidderdale AONB heritage events in 2011

16 - 17 April	World Heritage Weekend - Fountains Abbey and Studley Royal
16 - 31 July	Festival of British Archaeology
19 July	Principles of Conservation talk
12 August	Lime mortars and plasters
8 - 11 September	Heritage Open Days
1 October	Heritage Forum
8 October 2011	Historic building owners' day

Further events will be added to the calendar in due course. To be kept up to date with events and activities in the AONB, please add your details to our mailing list by emailing, telephoning or returning the form (below) to the AONB office.

Contacts

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Tel: 01423 712950

email: nidderdaleaonb@harrogate.gov.uk

Deadline for submission of articles for the next issue of this newsletter is 10 Jan 2012. Please email text and images to sally.childes@harrogate.gov.uk. Any 2011 news and events can be advertised on the AONB website. Please email items to nidderdaleaonb@harrogate.gov.uk

Yorkshire Dales LEADER

www.yorkshiredalesleader.co.uk

The Dales LEADER Co-ordinator, YDMT, Old Post Office, Main Street, Clapham, LA2 8DP.

Tel: 01524 251002

email rima.berry@ydmtd.org

✂ (cut out and return to the Nidderdale AONB Office, address above)

Want to go on our mailing list?

Yes, I would like to find out more about:

Volunteering Heritage skills Heritage events Local groups

Preferred method of contact:

Email or post

Please provide contact details:

Name

Home address/Email address

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Supported in Partnership by:

