

NEW LOOK AONB WEB SITE

The AONB website has recently been redesigned to provide better access to information on the Howardian Hills AONB.

The site contains a range of information including facts about the AONB, a list of accommodation providers and details of the grant scheme/project fund available.

A regularly updated news and events page means that you can keep up to date with the work of the AONB Unit.

The site can be viewed at www.howardianhills.org.uk

ACTION ON THE GROUND AT OSWALDKIRK

Villagers from Oswaldkirk joined forces with the AONB Unit and the British Trust for Conservation Volunteers (BTCV) to help enhance an important village space. Chestnut Bank in the centre of the village was in need of some care and attention. The first stage was the clearance of invasive weed species such as elder and brambles, then a new path was laid and some additional trees planted. The village has recently commissioned a new bench, which has been placed next to the site.



Creating the path at Chestnut Bank

Funding for the work came from Ryedale District Council's REACT scheme, the Parish Council and the AONB Joint Advisory Committee.

BENEFITING BIODIVERSITY



An area important for oak trees and their associated wildlife has received a boost, with additional trees planted this year. The site close to Helmsley contains some of the oldest oak trees in the area and is linked by a network of hedges and woods to the veteran trees in Duncombe Park.

The recently planted oaks have been grown from local seed at the Castle Howard Forest Nursery. They will help ensure that oak trees and the huge amount of wildlife which they support remain on the site for years to come.

New oak trees planted near Helmsley

BEAUTIFUL by Freya, aged 10

The Howardian Hills
Is a wondrous place
Beautiful, beautiful
The warmth in the air
Puts a smile on my face
Beautiful, beautiful

The life like a knot
Is never undone
Beautiful, beautiful
The fields so golden
Shine like the sun
Beautiful, beautiful

A place like this should
come to no harm
Protect the environment,
keep it calm!

WE'RE MOVING

By the time this Newsletter is published the AONB Unit should have moved to its new office in Wath Court, just outside Hovingham.

This move has been made possible due to an increase in funding from the Countryside Agency and North Yorkshire County Council.

At the time of going to print we do not yet have full details of our address and telephone numbers. These will be published on our web site and in local papers as soon as they are available.

UPDATE ON THE NATIVE WOODLAND DEVELOPMENT OFFICER

Following on from the article which appeared in the last edition of the Newsletter, Mike Chapman has been continuing his work in the Howardian Hills AONB and North York Moors National Park as the Native Woodland Development Officer.



Dale Wood, Bransby; Winter 2002/2003.

A plan to establish 3ha of new woodland in this location was successful in the Forestry Commission's JIGSAW Challenge scheme. The JIGSAW Challenge pays for the creation of new native woodlands that link or expand existing fragments of semi-natural woodland within the AONB.

He has been busy bringing woodland into appropriate management, establishing new native woodland and restoring Plantations on Ancient Woodland Sites. 2002 saw the planting of 5ha of new native woodland being approved under the Forestry Commission's 'JIGSAW Challenge Scheme'.

If you own or manage an area of woodland and would like some advice or support, please contact Mike Chapman on Tel: 01439 770657. Mike can:

- Offer practical help to woodland owners in the area.
- Provide FREE advisory visits to woodland owners and advice on woodland management, conservation, grants and felling regulations.
- Help to plan and apply for schemes to establish new native woodland.
- Survey Plantations on Ancient Woodland Sites and develop strategies for their future management.

DOGGY WASTE by Jamie, aged 8

As I come through in my wheelchair

I smell something horrible in the air

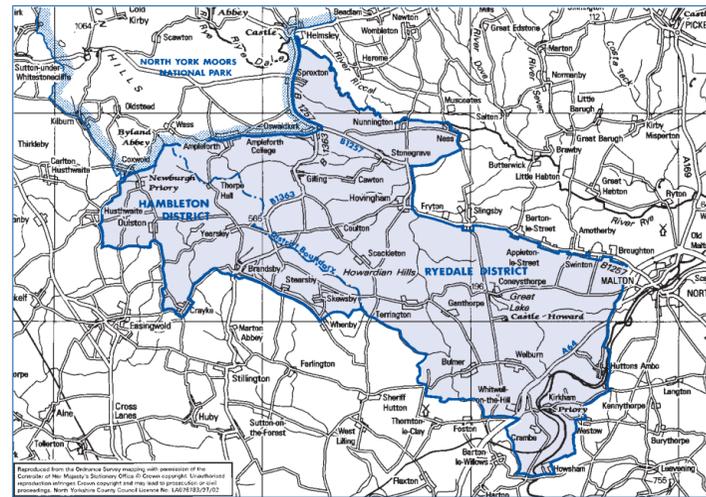
It looked awful, messy, dreadful and vile

All stacked up in a dirty pile

It looked a complete and utter disgrace

And here it was right next to my face

The Howardian Hills AONB FACT FILE



- The Howardian Hills covers 204 sq. km (79 sq. miles).
- The area was confirmed as an AONB in 1987.
- About 5,700 people live in the area.
- Over 15% of the area is wooded.



This Newsletter has been produced by the Howardian Hills AONB JAC

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Howardian Hills

AONB NEWS

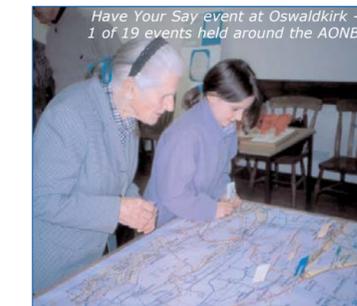
Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

Issue 4

October 2003

The Way Forward

This year the work of the AONB Unit has been dominated by the production of the new Management Plan, which will be published in the summer of 2004. This document will contain principles and objectives to help protect and enhance the area over the next 5 years and beyond.



Have Your Say event at Oswaldkirk - 1 of 19 events held around the AONB

recommendations. If you cannot attend the exhibitions but would like a copy of the Plan, please contact the AONB Office.

The final plan will be produced and presented to the AONB Joint Advisory Committee (JAC) for their approval in February 2004. The three local authorities (North Yorkshire, Ryedale and Hambleton) will then need to formally adopt the new Management Plan by 1st April 2004. This is a requirement placed on them by the Countryside and Rights of Way (CROW) Act. The Management



Children from Terrington School exploring their village - 1 of 14 school events held around the AONB

A detailed consultation exercise has been carried out, to ensure the Plan is as comprehensive as possible. People who live in, work in and use the area, agencies and organisations who operate in the area and visitors have all been consulted. Over 1,700 people have provided their thoughts and views on the future of the Howardian Hills and some of the children's work is included in this Newsletter.

A draft plan has now been written and will be published for comment on 20th October 2003. The formal consultation period will then run until 1st December 2003. A series of exhibitions has been set up as part of this consultation, to give local people an opportunity to comment on the Plan, its objectives and

Plan will then be printed in its final format in early summer 2004 and distributed to local farmers, Parish Councils, local shops and interested organisations.

The exhibitions will run from 4.00pm to 8.00pm at the following venues:

Tuesday 21st October 2003 at Terrington Village Hall.	Wednesday 22nd October 2003 at Bransby Village Hall.	Thursday 23rd October 2003 at Welburn Village Hall.
Friday 24th October 2003 at Oswaldkirk Village Hall.	Monday 27th October 2003 at Amotherby Village Hall.	

ANNUAL REPORT: April 2002 - March 2003

In what will now be a regular feature of our Newsletters, we tell you about the work that the AONB Unit has completed during the last financial year.

Landscape projects

- 4.7km of new hedge planting grant aided by the Joint Advisory Committee.
- Repairs to 53m of roadside walls also grant aided.



New fencing around a SINC at Coulton

Landscape/ biodiversity projects

- Two successful applications submitted to the Countryside Stewardship Scheme on behalf of local farmers. These cover 390ha (975 acres) of land. We wrote letters of support for a further 5 applications.
- Two previously-submitted applications under the Woodland Grant Scheme now implemented – 2.8ha (7 acres) of new farm woodland planted.

Biodiversity projects

- One application under the Forestry Commission's JIGSAW scheme now implemented – 4.3ha (11 acres) of new native woodland planted.
- New fencing installed around 5 Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCs), to allow conservation grazing by Exmoor ponies in the future. A total of 2.8km of new fencing, 10 new gates and 2 new water troughs.
- Conservation grazing of 2 SINCs by Exmoor ponies.

Cultural Heritage

- Repairs to 40m of Park wall grant aided.
- Archaeological survey carried out on 26ha (65 acres) of former heathland, now under woodland. Traces of pre-historic bank-and-ditch boundary system discovered.
- 40 old village name signs, fingerposts and mileposts repainted.

Rights of Way

- Comprehensive programme of new gates, fingerposts and bridges completed in the

parishes of Howsham, Firby, Henderskelfe, Terrington, Scackleton, Coulton, Huttons Ambo, Broughton, Swinton, Amotherby, Gilling, Grimston, Appleton-le-Street and Barton-le-Street.

Information

- AONB maps and information points established in 2 village shops and 1 pub.
- AONB website re-designed and expanded (see separate article).



New hedge, Oulston

AONB Management Plan

- Programme for preparation agreed by the JAC.
- AONB Partnership Group meeting held.
- 8 individual Topic Group meetings held.
- 7 village consultation events and 9 school events held.
- AONB Visitors and Users Survey commissioned.

AONB Unit administration

- New Assistant AONB Officer appointed.
- JAC resolved to move AONB Unit office to the AONB.

WHAT IS AN AONB?

An Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) is an area of land that is deemed to be of such high landscape value and national importance that it warrants special protection.



There are 37 AONBs in England covering about 15% of the country and they have been described as the jewels of the English landscape.

AONBs are designated by the Countryside Agency and they have the same protection and status as the National Parks. This means that AONBs receive additional resources to help protect and enhance the landscape and wildlife value of the area and have tighter planning controls.

A statutory duty is also placed on Local Authorities to consider the long-term management of the areas, through the production of regular Management Plans.

The Howardian Hills AONB – designated in 1987

BAT AND BIRD BOXES GET A BOOST

As part of the community consultation events mentioned on page 1, people were given the opportunity to make either a bat or tree sparrow box free of charge, for them to take away and erect at home.

A few bruised thumbs and a lot of noise later, 75 bat boxes and 50 tree sparrow bird boxes have been made.

All box-builders were given details of where to erect the box and how to maintain it.



Bat and bird box making at Bulmer

SLOW DOWN! By Gavin, aged 9

*Slow down slow down
The cat is on the case.*

*Slow down slow down
The dog is on the loose.*

*Slow down slow down
The old people are waiting.*

*Slow down slow down
The limit is only 30mph.*

*Slow down slow down
The cars are hooting.*

*Slow down slow down
The traffic lights are red.*

A SOBERING THOUGHT FOR HOME OWNERS

At the recent consultation events many people said that the local village shops were important to them, but few probably realised how important.

A recent article which appeared in the Agra Europe newsletter said that in Sweden "when the last shop closes, house prices automatically fall by some 25%".

WILDLIFE by TS

*Wildlife is a beautiful thing
Hear the birds swoop and sing
Beetles crawl on the flowers
This special place is all ours.*

*Nature has a special way
Keeping me happy every day
The Howardian Hills is very calm
Where animals know they will
come to no harm.*

SPOTLIGHT ON: David Brown

HEAD FORESTER AND PARK MANAGER FOR THE HOVINGHAM ESTATE

Woodland is an important component of the Howardian Hills AONB. With around 15% of the area covered in trees, woodlands help give the area its unique character. To find out more we have been to talk to David Brown, who has been working in forestry for the last 20 years and is the 4th generation forester from the Brown family to work for the Hovingham Estate.

Why did you decide to become a forester?

"I've always had a love for the countryside and it's in my blood."

Is it unusual for an Estate such as Hovingham to employ a forester?

"Yes. The Worsley's have a particular interest in woodland and always have. They employ a forester to ensure that their woodlands are managed to a very high silvicultural standard and that the quality of timber produced is maintained. If they didn't employ a forester they would have to use a Management Company and that would mean that decisions about the area would be made by people from outside the area such as London. I think that's wrong because these people would not have the same understanding and passion for the area as someone working and living here."

What are the biggest problems facing woodland management at the moment?

"The price of timber. There is very little money in timber at the moment. The majority of what we grow is coniferous such as larch and Douglas fir, as these provide the greatest return on our investment. But even these are not providing much income at the moment. However, if it weren't for the conifer trees the woodlands would be in a lot worse state. Conifer trees can provide an income after 40 years, whereas broad-leaved trees such as oak take a lot longer, up to 120 years. If it weren't for the conifers you wouldn't have the parkland you see today, you wouldn't have local people employed on the Estate and in associated businesses such as sawmills, and you wouldn't have



David Brown inspecting an area of newly planted woodland on the Hovingham Estate.

such a wide range of flora and fauna."

Do the woods support much wildlife?

"Absolutely. For the first time that I can remember we have had buzzards breeding on the Estate. I saw a nightjar the other day and there is a flock of crossbills in the woods. Those who say that conifer woods have no wildlife have obviously never been to Hovingham. We also have nationally rare species such as a plant called the Baneberry (*Actaea spicata*). The money we have previously earned from the conifers has allowed us to spend some time writing a Woodland Design Plan, which sets out our strategy for the woodland as a whole. This allows us to not only grow a productive timber crop but to also manage the woodlands for other things such as wildlife but also sport, public access and archaeological sites."

Do you get any funding to help with the biodiversity work?

"Funding has been sourced from the AONB Joint Advisory Committee. Without this recent support much of the biodiversity work would not have been possible, as there is simply not enough financial return from timber at the moment."

Describe a typical day.

"There is no 'typical day', although the work tends to be more seasonal. Overall I know the objectives that must be met through my work programme and therefore I tend to be fairly flexible in my approach, even though it seems haphazard at times. I find it challenging to adapt quickly to juggle the weather conditions, availability of contractors, staff and other resources to achieve the best performance for the business and this stimulation gives me a real buzz. A working day should start at 7.30am and go to 4.00pm but to be honest I always work over. It is hard work but also very rewarding."

What could people do to help?

"If they really want to make a difference people should start demanding certified timber. When you buy any wood product you should look for the FSC label which shows that it is from a sustainable resource. Even better, use local sawmills and ask them for locally produced timber. That way people will not only be helping to keep local jobs and make sure the woodlands are well managed, but will also be helping to ensure the Howardian Hills AONB remains one of the most beautiful parts of the country."