Photography Competition

Amateur photographers are invited to take part in a competition to capture the special qualities of the Howardian Hills AONB. There are junior and adult categories, great prizes and all finalists’ work will be displayed at The Yorkshire Arboretum, Castle Howard, next spring.

The adult competition is divided into four themes:
1. The Landscape
2. People in the AONB – living, working and enjoying
3. History & Heritage
4. Flora & Fauna

Whilst younger competitors are welcome to enter the adult competition we also have one category especially for you. If you were 17 or under on 31st August 2014 please submit one or two images to us on the topic:
5. “Why the Howardian Hills AONB is special to me”

All photographs must be taken within the Howardian Hills AONB; a map of the area is available to view on www.howardianhills.org.uk. Each entry must have a title and location and may include an optional description. Continued on page 3 …
In this regular feature we tell you about some of the work that the AONB Unit funded or facilitated during the last financial year.

**Landscape**
- 710m of hedge planting/gapping-up and 4 new in-field/hedgerow trees
- 328m of wall restoration

**Landscape/Biodiversity**
- 1 farmer/land manager advised about Entry Level or Higher Level Stewardship and comments submitted on 4 Higher Level Stewardship applications.
- 2 SINCs entered into new Higher Level Stewardship agreements
- 1 English Woodland Grant Scheme application consultation appraisal

**Biodiversity**
- Control of Himalayan balsam along 5.8km of Wath Beck
- Clearance of rhododendron in and adjacent to Park Wood Fishponds SINC
- Conservation grazing of 5 SINCs or other important sites by Exmoor Ponies
- Management of species/vegetation on or affecting 2 other SINCs or SSSIs (by volunteers or contractors)
- 1 site surveyed, to create a major new SINC at Yearsley
- Management works on 45 Special Interest Road Verges

**Historic Environment**
- Listed Buildings at Risk Survey in the Hambleton area of the AONB
- Renovation of the City of Troy turf maze, near Dalby
- Restoration of 2 traditional direction signs

**Enjoying the AONB**
- Contributed to the 2014 VisitEngland “English Countryside” marketing initiative
- A Great Outdoors booklet was produced in partnership with the North York Moors National Park and Welcome to Yorkshire
- The Green Traveller Guide to the Howardian Hills, including information on walk routes and public transport, went live on the internet
- 1 evening talk
- A team of at least 2 volunteers working on path maintenance in the AONB at least every other week
- Removing litter from at least 10 sites in the AONB on a regular basis

**Communities, Schools & Education**
- Our 4-year project to twin primary schools in the AONB with schools in Hull and York continued. 14 visits took place
- 4 Junior Rangers activity sessions were held during the school half-terms and holidays. Attendance ranged from 18 to 23 children per session.
- Projects funded in 5 villages, including 1 Village Hall project
- Winter Warmth events held at Husthwaite and Slingsby
- Supported the Ryedale Rural Community Awards
- Attended the Ryedale Show
- Completed installation of 22 of the 25th Anniversary log seats, with the remaining 3 locations identified

**Financial Statement 2013/14**

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<th>INCOME</th>
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<th>EXPENDITURE</th>
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<td>Management Plan</td>
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<td>LEADER</td>
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<td>Young People (Schools Twinning)</td>
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**£196,739**

| £207,226

Brought forward (57,734) Carried forward (47,247)

**£254,473** (Resources from grant recipients, volunteers, etc)

Total Value of AONB Unit Activity in 2013/14 **£337,546**
On the River Rye redundant fencing which was resulting in poaching was removed by the landowner. The damaged area of parkland has greened up well and the landowner is delighted with the result. He is also keen to remove Himalayan balsam on his land to reduce sediment contamination. Giant hogweed treatment has been undertaken on the Derwent at Menethorpe Beck and downstream from Kirkham, where both giant hogweed and Himalayan balsam have been treated.

The Environment Agency own a number of structures between Malton and Barmby Barrage and over the next few years will be deciding their future. This autumn they will be focusing on Kirkham Weir. Rosa Foster is the Project Manager; she can be contacted on 0113 8196939 or e-mail rosa.foster@environment-agency.gov.uk

For information about slug control on farmland please visit www.getpelletwise.co.uk. It is not possible for Yorkshire Water to remove metaldehyde during the water treatment process, so please can land managers:

- Avoid using metaldehyde products if the field drains are running or if rain is forecast
- Talk to your agronomist about best practice measures of slug control
- Consider using products with ferric phosphate active ingredient

Duncan Fyfe, Environment Agency, has produced the excellent Water Friendly Farming Good Practice Guide for the River Derwent, with the aid of partner funding. The guide is available on the East Yorkshire Rivers Trust website www.eastyorkshireriverstrust.org.uk

David Rees, Catchment Sensitive Farming Advisor (River Derwent)
Exploration drilling has taken place sporadically in the AONB for approximately 20 years, and there is a natural gas field in the nearby Vale of Pickering that produces gas for electricity generation.

In addition to the proximity of existing natural gas-producing wells, a British Geological Survey report published last year indicated that the geology beneath the AONB may also contain shale gas. It suggested that shale rock which may be suitable for hydraulic fracturing (fracking) is likely to exist between 1,500 and 4,000 metres below the ground surface. This in effect means that the rocks below the AONB could contain reserves of petroleum, natural gas or shale gas.

The extent of these reserves, and whether they would be commercially viable or not, is likely to be tested via a series of steps. The first is a 3D seismic survey, as has been carried out locally by Tesla Exploration Ltd in recent months. This would need to be followed by an exploration/appraisal well. This would assess the composition of the rock and any hydrocarbon reserves present. If this indicated a potentially economically viable reserve, full production well/s would be the final step. The size and local impact of a production well/s would depend on whether the target was natural gas, petroleum or shale gas (via fracking). Both exploration/appraisal and production wells require full planning permission, together with permits from the Environment Agency and Health & Safety Executive. It can’t automatically be assumed that each step would proceed, or that planning permission/other consents granted for one phase would be granted for subsequent phases.

We have recently established a pattern of working through which we have a practical conservation or Rights of Way task every other Tuesday throughout the year. This is thanks to the support of North Yorkshire County Council and their recently appointed Volunteer Task Leader for the east of the County. If you would be interested in joining this group, or assisting us with any of the other activities mentioned above, please contact liz.bassindale@northyorks.gov.uk

Volunteering Opportunities

The work of the AONB Unit is supported by a dedicated team of volunteers who help us with a wide variety of activities. Over the past twelve months volunteers have, amongst other tasks, cleared rhododendron to restore woodland habitats, made bat boxes with children, managed species-rich conservation grassland in a churchyard, assisted with Junior Rangers sessions, pulled Himalayan balsam and represented the AONB on our stand at the Ryedale Show.
There has been a mill on the island, near Howsham, for over 900 years (it was recorded in the Doomsday Book). Designed as a folly, the current mill was built in 1755 and for nearly 200 years it ground corn for flour and animal feed. In 1947 the mill ceased operating and the building very quickly fell into disrepair. Fast forward to 2003 when Dave Mann, who was canoeing on the river, came across the ruin of the mill. He embarked with his wife and family on a turbulent ten year journey to restore the building. The work could not have been completed without the help of 200 volunteers and the expert craftsmanship of Stephen Pickering Ltd and Stephen Drake. The Mill’s new role is as a centre for education about the environment, history and hydro-power. Instead of the millwheel turning stones to grind corn it now generates electricity. With the combined installation of an Archimedean Screw on the weir we generate approximately 30Kw (enough to power 50 houses). We accommodate school visits focusing on the topics of Climate Change, Energy, Natural Environment, Green Building, Water, Historical Interpretation and Bread Making.

Introducing CaVCA

On 1st April this year Ryedale Voluntary Action and Seachange Community Trust merged to become Coast and Vale Community Action (CaVCA). The newly formed organisation continues to offer free advice and support to the voluntary and community sector in Ryedale, Scarborough and Whitby with the Ryedale team now operating from a new office at Stanley Harrison House in Malton.

We have worked with a number of charities and community groups in the Howardian Hills AONB. The level of support for these groups will remain and there will be the welcome addition of support from CaVCA’s Social Enterprise Advisor, David Stone, now funded to support Social Enterprises in Ryedale. Coast and Vale Community Action are passionate about supporting thriving local communities and since the merger we have become a much stronger organisation and can offer a wider range of support to voluntary, community, social and micro enterprise organisations.

We are here to support all aspects of community activity - whether that’s advice on funding the refurbishment of a village hall or helping to set up a village community enterprise. Over the years I have found that the communities of the Howardian Hills AONB have often led the way on delivering fantastic community projects and I am looking forward to continuing to support their work.

I can be contacted by phone on 01653 600120 or by email at sarahlm@cavca.org.uk. For advice on setting up and running a Social Enterprise contact David Stone on 01723 362205 or email David.Stone@cavca.org.uk. Further information about CaVCA can be found at www.cavca.org.uk

Sarah Lally-Marley, Funding and Development Officer, CaVCA

Ryedale Rural Awards 2013
North York Moors, Coast and Hills LEADER Programme 2015–2020

Plans are well underway for a new North York Moors, Coast and Hills (NYMCH) LEADER Programme. The proposed LEADER area will incorporate the Howardian Hills AONB and the south western corner of Ryedale, the North York Moors National Park, the Vale of Pickering, East Cleveland and the Heritage Coast. Our application for funding to deliver the Programme was submitted to Defra in early September; a decision is expected in December.

The 2015-2020 NYMCH LEADER Programme will have a strong economic focus and will be looking to support projects, communities and businesses that contribute to Defra’s national priorities of creating jobs and supporting growth in the local economy. Proposed areas of activity include:

- Farm productivity
- Micro and small enterprise and farm diversification
- Rural tourism
- Rural services
- Culture and heritage
- Forestry productivity

If you are interested in the Programme and some of its potential opportunities, becoming a member of our Local Action Group (LAG) will ensure you stay up to date with all the latest news. The LAG registration form is available on our website:

www.moorscoastandhills.org.uk/how-to-get-involved

For more information please visit:

www.moorscoastandhills.org.uk/2015-2020-leader-programme

or contact Amy Thomas on 01439 772700 or email a.thomas@northyorkmoors.org.uk

Amy Thomas, Programme Manager,
Moors, Coast and Hills LEADER

AONB Management Plan review

By law, the Management Plan for the AONB has to be reviewed every five years. The Plan has just completed its latest review and came into effect on 1st April 2014.

Taking into account the latest available evidence and statistics relating to the AONB, the Objectives and Actions from the previous Plan were updated as necessary. As might be expected, some haven’t changed very much but others have altered considerably. Five years might not seem that long, but many new Policies and Strategies have been launched since 2009, when the previous Plan was written, and new issues have emerged. The new Plan can be viewed at www.howardianhills.org.uk/11/Management_Plan.html

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 9,300 people live in or immediately adjacent to the area.
- Around 18% of the area is wooded.

This Newsletter has been produced by the Howardian Hills AONB JAC