

Managing Change in the Countryside

Maintaining the character of England's rural landscapes is going to depend on shared vision, creative solutions and strong partnerships.

Regional Development Agencies and rural heritage

Belinda Knight

Head of Rural Heritage and Tourism, South-East England Development Agency

Regional Development Agencies (RDAs) – what use are they for rural heritage? Sometimes they are perceived as working with urban areas, business, and large-scale regeneration projects, with little concern for rural heritage. That is not necessarily true – RDAs' framework means that, where competing resource priorities allow, they contribute a useful role as influencers and deliverers.

What can RDAs do? The structural framework

RDAs are bounded by a strategic framework within which all their activities must be set. Their purposes are formulated in the Regional Development Agencies Act 1998, which specifically instructs that the five purposes apply as

much to rural areas as non-rural areas. This is appropriate – even within the South-East, often considered suburban and congested, where 80 per cent of the land mass, a third of the business base and a quarter of the population are rural. In summary, the act's five purposes comprise:

- furthering economic development and regeneration
- promoting business efficiency, investment and competition
- promoting employment
- enhancing skills for employment
- contributing to sustainable development where applicable.

From this statutory foundation, each RDA and its regional partners produce a Regional Economic Strategy (RES), revised at intervals. These reflect the different priorities of very diverse regions. An RDA's own contribution to the achievement of the region-wide RES is set out in its Corporate or Business plans, while government-set Public Service Agreement (PSA) targets measure achievement.

Funding is, of course, key. RDAs receive their money from government, mostly as a 'single pot' for them to determine their own priorities within the statutory rules and regionally agreed RES priorities. This welcome freedom ensures that diverse regional needs can be addressed in different ways. It is, however, an open secret that RDAs receive vastly different allocations, both in absolute and in per-head-of-population terms. These two factors – regional diversity, and varied funding – result in the variety of RDA approaches to rural heritage.

RDA activities are of two broad types – influencing, and delivery. Working with regional partners as a catalyst is a highly effective contribution to the regional economy, even when funding is limited. These two approaches are examined below.

RDAs as influencer

Most RDAs participate in their region's Historic Environment Forum, where they



The North-West Development Agency and One North East are two of the key players behind Hadrian's Wall Heritage Ltd, a partnership company set up to promote the economic, social and cultural regeneration of the World Heritage Site.

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represent economic development in its widest sense. RDAs also have relationships with their Protected Landscapes. In the South-East, for example, 40 per cent (source: Office of National Statistics) of the land has a Protected Landscape designation, and we are fortunate to have a close relationship with the nine AONBs and one National Park that fall principally within the region (the South Downs is proposed, designated but not yet confirmed, as another National Park). These are key guardians of the rural landscape heritage. Another key landscape heritage partner is Natural England.

Sustainable tourism, both for the built and landscape heritage, is often a major economic activity for rural areas. Tourism organisations have changed significantly in recent years, and in some areas former tourist boards have been absorbed into RDAs. Irrespective of organisational structure, RDAs work closely with tourism functions, as well as bodies such as the National Trust, English Heritage and Historic Houses Association, and some practical delivery examples are discussed below.

A less obvious, but important, relationship is with the Climate Change Partnerships. Climate change is the single most important factor affecting the future of rural heritage. For example, the South-East England Development Agency's (SEEDA) rural team participates in the Tourism Sub-group which aims to ensure that both public and private sectors of the visitor economy consider climate change in their planning and operations, to 'climate proof' their business and policy decision-making. This sub-group also has cross-regional links with its South-West counterpart.

RDAs as delivery bodies

RDA rural heritage delivery projects encompass a huge range of project type, not just for the built heritage. The transfer in October 2006 of existing England Rural Development Programme (ERDP) projects, and the aspects of the delivery of the new scheme that will replace it, to RDAs will increase available delivery funding, some of which can be directed towards heritage projects. The amount is unknown at the time of writing, but the demand is expected to outstrip resources.

Work to promote landscape heritage includes countryside education grants for work with schools – for example SEEDA gave money for Hampshire Country Learning to research school farm-visit issues. Another landscape heritage project worked with the region's protected landscapes on climate change, involving key partners in the UK Climate Impacts Programme, the South-East Climate Change Partnership, and others.

Rural local distinctiveness and horticultural heritage projects can be supported through local food group initiatives. Some RDAs have supported a single region-wide food group, with work on training, marketing and product development for producers of quality local foods.

Rural housing heritage is discussed elsewhere in this bulletin (see Trow, pp 15–16), but an example of RDAs' delivery role is the North-West Development Agency's housing-market-renewal work with heritage and craft skills.

Turning to the built heritage, and looking first at the small scale, some RDAs support schemes which use redundant buildings, for example the SEEDA-funded project at Yonse Farm, Kent, to convert an 18th-century Listed granary into office accommodation for rural-based organisations.

At the special and spectacular end of the scale, Yorkshire Forward contributed £1.5 million towards the first phase of restoration at the Grade I-Listed gardens and parkland at Wentworth Castle and Stainborough Park near Barnsley, which featured on BBC's *Restoration* programme. This support complemented that of Heritage Lottery Fund, English Heritage, the Learning and Skills Council, and others. New facilities for visitors and the local community will be created, including educational services. The first phase should be complete by the end of 2007.

Another example is the joint project by One North East and the North-West Development Agency at Hadrian's Wall. They have created a new organisation, Hadrian's Wall Heritage Limited, to manage, maintain and preserve this

Yonse Farm, near Ashford, Kent. The Traditional Buildings Preservation Trust and Centre for Rare Breeds have combined forces to give new life to this important Georgian farmstead, with the aid of funding from the South-East England Development Agency.

World Heritage Site. This partnership aims to realise economic, social and cultural regeneration of the site and its surrounding communities, through sustainable tourism, management and conservation activities.

Conclusion

From protected landscapes to local food, and from redundant building grants to honeypot tourist sites, rural heritage has many facets. RDAs' statutory and regionally agreed priorities often coincide with rural heritage aims. There are inevitable constraints of competing priorities for RDA staff time and funding, but within these parameters RDAs can be enthusiastic supporters and partners for rural heritage. Working both as influencers and delivery bodies, RDAs collaborate with partners to enhance the economic and social opportunities for rural heritage.

A sort of national property – not ours but ours to enjoy

David Butterworth
Chief Executive, Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority

Many of the most dramatic cultural landscapes in England can be seen in our National Parks. These landscapes, of national and international importance, range from the Broads, largely

created through peat extraction in the medieval period, through the stone-axe factories of the Lake District to the valleys of the Yorkshire Dales, with their thousands of kilometres of drystone walls enclosing botanically rich meadows and pastures, punctuated by stone field-barns and overlying the remains of earlier phases of land use.

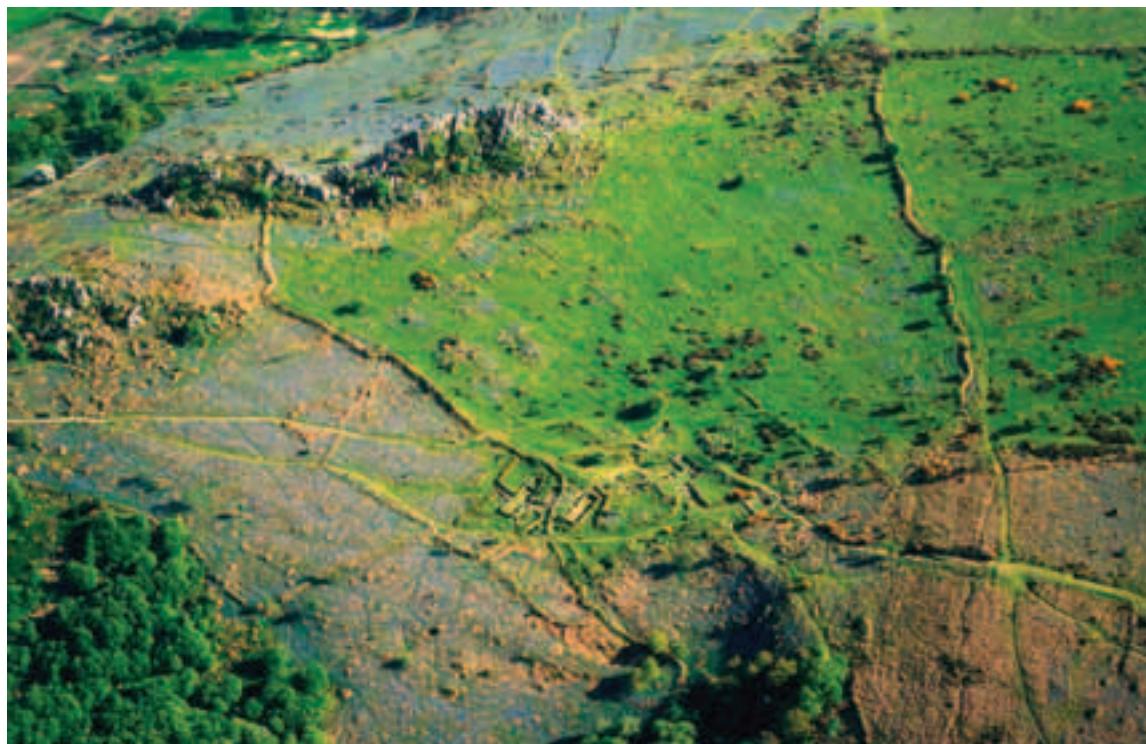
National Parks cover 10,506 sq km, about 8 per cent of the landscape of England and administratively form a unique part of the local government system (see map p 33). National Park Authorities (NPAs) have many of the powers of local authorities but their members are appointed: either by constituent local authorities or the Secretary of State. The NPAs are charged with the difficult task of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage of their areas while promoting opportunities for understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of those areas. Unlike many national parks elsewhere in the world the UK National Parks are not wilderness areas. Approximately 207,000 people live within the nine English parks, and most land within them is privately owned although the amount varies from 96 per cent in the Yorkshire Dales to 52.5 per cent in the New Forest.

The 1945 Dower report, which set the scene for the National Park legislation of 1949, recognised that 'the landscape was the joint product of nature and human use of many generations;



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Riddings Farm, Reeth, Swaledale. The Yorkshire Dales is still a working agricultural landscape. Hay meadows and pastures, bounded by drystone walls and punctuated by field barns, are evidence for the pastoral farming of the last five centuries. They overlie the earthwork remains of medieval arable fields and prehistoric and Romano-British settlements. Of the 1,442 traditional farm buildings in Swaledale and Arkengarthdale, 1,044 are field barns.



© English Heritage

The Hound Tor Premier Archaeological Landscape contains one of the largest deserted medieval settlements on Dartmoor as well as evidence for prehistoric farming. The ideal management requires the maintenance of a very short (50–100mm) grass sward. Bracken and gorse are encroaching: the bracken needs to be removed and the spread of gorse controlled.

it cannot be preserved in anything like its present aspect unless that human use is kept going’.

The 1949 Act, and the reports which preceded it, failed to recognise the pressures that would arise in the following half-century. These included the increase in private-car ownership, and increased mechanisation and intensification of agriculture, with its parallel reductions in the numbers employed in working the land and in the economic viability and consequent decline of rural services. These trends continue today and are accentuated by other factors such as the need for more sustainable energy supplies; variations in temperature and rainfall patterns and their effects on agriculture, biodiversity and the sustainability of rock and soil surfaces; enhanced animal-welfare standards which reduce the suitability of traditional farm buildings for animal husbandry; and a general decline in agricultural viability. While agriculture remains the major land use in National Parks, leisure pursuits such as grouse shooting are increasingly impacting on landscape management in some, and tourism is now the major economic sector in all. Dealing with these issues while having regard for the social and economic well-being of local communities and trying to maintain the special qualities of their areas is the challenge facing the National Park Authorities. The parks are not museums, preserving the landscape as it was – either

in the late 1940s after five years of wartime activity and agricultural development, or a romanticised version of the landscape of the agricultural depression of the 1930s – but living, working landscapes that are in a constant state of change.

The NPAs’ principal funding comes from central government (£43 million in 2006/7) but this is small in comparison with the sums available to other bodies dealing with the countryside, particularly Natural England and its predecessors, the Rural Development Service and English Nature. This has meant that the NPAs have become primarily enabling organisations, dealing with change through persuasion and advice, rather than directly intervening in the landscape. Partnership working is enshrined within the management plans produced by each NPA: management plans for the National Park rather than just the Authority. Since 1997 all NPAs have employed small teams of specialists to carry out the tasks of conservation and interpretation. These interdisciplinary teams are one of their strengths. Another is an ability to utilise the love people have for National Park landscapes by recruiting volunteers. Volunteer activities range from practical tasks such as footpath maintenance to monitoring the condition of listed buildings.

The NPAs seek to be exemplars of, and laboratories for, good landscape management. For example, the pilot Integrated Rural

Development project in the Peak District led to Farm Conservation Schemes being established in many National Parks. These pioneered the creation of Whole Farm Plans, informed by assessment (or survey) of historical and botanical assets – something now rolled out nationwide with Higher Level Environmental Stewardship (see Hunns this issue, pp 35–7). Another example, the Barns and Walls Conservation Scheme in the Yorkshire Dales, required the designation of the largest Conservation Area in the country and incorporated a ‘use and condition’ survey so that particularly important barns could be targeted for repair. This restoration work is mainly carried out by local contractors, and thus indirectly supports the wider local community (see Tunnicliffe this issue, pp 37–8).

The National Parks have an unparalleled archaeological resource, including 22 per cent of England’s Scheduled Monuments. The slight remains of many archaeological landscapes are best seen in areas of close-cropped vegetation. The removal of grazing pressure due to the culling of livestock as a result of the foot-and-mouth outbreak of 2001, accentuated by stock reductions negotiated for biodiversity reasons, had a dramatic impact on the visibility of some landscapes while changes in agri-environment support mean that proposals for ‘rewilding’ have emerged. These demand careful scrutiny to ensure that pressures for biodiversity do not harm the evidence of thousands of years of cultural activity. To address this, the Moorland Futures project in Dartmoor brought together statutory agencies and hill-farmers to develop a vision of the moor in 2030. This process identified 14 Premier Archaeological Landscapes where the management of archaeology should take precedence over nature conservation interests and may offer a template for other areas.

Details of this and other innovative approaches adopted by the National Parks, many of which have attracted external funding, particularly from lottery and European sources, are detailed in *A Landscape Legacy* (available at www.english-heritage.org.uk/finestlandscapes), a book designed to inspire best practice in historic environment management.

England’s 9 National Parks and 36 AONBs are designed to conserve the country’s finest natural and cultural landscapes. The map also shows the distribution of archaeological survey projects carried out by English Heritage in these designated landscapes (see pp 24–5).

AONBs: managing landscapes of complex value

Mike Taylor

Chief Executive, National Association of Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty

Around 15 per cent of England’s land area lies within 36 Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs), with comparable areas in Wales and Northern Ireland. These designated areas are among the most beautiful landscapes in England, but none are wilderness. Instead they are a record of human activity over many millennia. In some AONBs, such as West Penwith, Cornwall, or the North Wessex Downs, the prehistoric origins of the landscape are still a significant element of landscape character. In others, medieval landscapes survive intact, such as Braunton Great Field in North Devon, and many more AONBs include extensive enclosure landscapes or the results of 17th and 18th-century landscape design, the Howardian Hills being a prime example. Elsewhere the remains of industrial activity and abandonment are a dominant theme, as in Cornwall and the North Pennines. Modern activity has influenced the landscapes of all AONBs to a greater or lesser degree, with an unusual example provided by parts of Cannock Chase, as a result of its role in two world wars, as a prisoner of war camp, displaced persons settlement and army training ground!

The history of AONB landscapes is, therefore, a reflection of the historical and cultural changes that have taken place in the British Isles since the start of human history. While this





The Quantock Hills AONB: a view of East Quantoxhead, Somerset
© Hazel Riley, English Heritage

was not – and still is not – the primary purpose of a designation based on aesthetic criteria, it can be no accident that heritage and cultural considerations feature highly in the aesthetic judgements required for designation.

AONBs are complex landscapes that integrate a wide range of attributes, both physical and spiritual. In addition to their legacy of important geological, wildlife and historic sites and features, all AONBs have a strong ‘sense of place’ that evokes powerful emotions in people who live in them and visit them. This ‘sense of place’ owes much to the AONBs’ cultural heritage, both through the physical remains of their historic landscapes and settlements or a rich artistic heritage, such as Wordsworth in the Wye Valley or A E Houseman in the Shropshire Hills.

Following the 1949 Wildlife and Countryside Act, government’s main focus for almost the next 50 years was on designation. Attempts to stimulate more commitment from government and local authorities to the positive role the AONBs could play in delivering recreational, wildlife, heritage and educational policies met with limited success. In the 1990s, however, there was a noticeable change in the attitude of a wide range of organisations, stimulated by pressure from the Countryside Commission and by the increasing political profile of the dramatic changes in landscape quality wrought by post-war land-management policies.

In 2000 the Countryside and Rights of Way (CROW) Act for England and Wales confirmed that National Parks and AONB landscapes have the same status. In addition, Part IV of the Act introduced some important provisions that included:

- the creation of conservation boards for selected AONBs by means of an order by the Secretary of State
- requiring the preparation and publication of a Management Plan for every AONB, and its periodic review, and
- placing a duty on public bodies to have regard to the need to conserve and enhance the

natural beauty of the AONB when carrying out their duties.

The introduction of these new arrangements has led to greater recognition of the potential of AONBs to contribute to a wide range of public interests. The preparation of management plans, through broadly based partnerships of local, regional and national bodies, provides an ideal mechanism for integrating the work of all those with an interest in the long-term future of these precious landscapes and the communities that live in, work in and enjoy them. The first round of management plans, produced between 2000 and 2004, all contain policies and programmes that will protect and enhance the historic environment in AONBs. The inevitably wide variation in the level of detail and commitment to deliver the action needed to achieve these objectives reflects both financial constraints and the recent origin of the newer partnerships.

Among the most positive measures in the CROW Act was the requirement for all public bodies to consider the interests of AONBs when developing their own policies. This has led to the formalisation of the developing relationships between AONBs and a range of public bodies, including heritage agencies. In December 2004, the Chairman of the National Association for AONBs signed a joint accord with the Chief Executives of English Heritage and CADW, which committed all three organisations to closer working, building on the good work that had already been achieved with the first generation of management plans. This closer co-operation between AONB teams and colleagues working in the heritage agencies is exemplified by *Outstanding Beauty: Outstanding Heritage* (available at www.english-heritage.org.uk/finestlandscapes), which highlights the range of joint initiatives already bearing fruit across England and Wales.

AONB management plans have to be reviewed every five years, with most coming up for review over the next three years. This provides an excellent opportunity for even



better integration of the historic and cultural objectives for AONB management with the landscape, wildlife and geology as well as the social and economic interests of the local communities. It will also be an opportunity to bring together a range of public organisations to help deliver the government's policies to make access and understanding of our rural heritage available to a wider audience through the Defra Diversity Action Plan due out in 2007. By working closely together in a true partnership, the delivery of the AONB management plans will provide an exemplar mechanism for all those with an interest in the future of our most treasured landscapes to reach those sections of the population who currently do not feel that the countryside is for them. This is an important step towards securing the broadly based and active public support essential if AONBs – and their heritage – are to gain the long-term political support required to ensure future generations enjoy the same pleasure, stimulation and fun as today's users.

Stewardship of the past: farming the rural historic environment

Victoria Hunns

Senior Historic Environment Specialist, Natural England

The role of Natural England

On 2 October 2006, Natural England, a new body charged with the conservation of the natural environment, was created. Natural England brings together three organisations: Defra's Rural Development Service, English Nature and the Landscape, Access and

Recreation division of the Countryside Agency. As the government's statutory adviser on the natural environment, Natural England is responsible for conserving and enhancing the value and beauty of England's natural environment and promoting access, recreation and public well-being for the benefit of today's and future generations.

A key 'purpose' of Natural England is that of 'conserving and enhancing the landscape', which 'includes, but goes wider than, conserving the natural beauty of the landscape. It could for example cover conserving field boundaries (such as hedgerows and drystone walls), and monuments, buildings and sub-surface archaeological features which contribute to the landscape' (NERC Act 2006; Explanatory Notes to the NERC Act, 2006, Para 63). As such, Natural England can conserve and enhance the English landscape for aesthetic, cultural and historic purposes as well as those carried out for habitat protection purposes.

Natural England's strategic objectives, published in 2006, also emphasise the delivery of integrated environmental objectives and outcomes by making specific reference to the conserving and enhancing of landscape, cultural heritage and other features of the built and natural environment.

An important mechanism for this is through the administration and delivery of Defra's agri-environment schemes, which form part of the wider England Rural Development Programme (ERDP). These schemes, which reward land managers for undertaking good environmental practice on their farm holdings, are one of the principal sources of funding for the rural historic environment. In *Heritage Counts 2005* Defra reported that, over a five-year period,



Known from parish records to have been blown down in 1667–78 and rebuilt in 1702, this building was found to be a typical Sussex timber-framed barn underneath the external accretions. Using only the building's archaeological evidence, the HLS grant-aided works reinstated the thatched roof and wattle-and-daub infill. The restoration won a Sussex Heritage Award and the barn is now used to shelter participants attending wild-flower seed-harvesting demonstrations on the estate.

© Ruth Gaimer, Natural England



© Blaise Vyner

Piercebridge Roman fort and a modern organic farm in the Tees Valley. This 112-ha organic holding has an HLS agreement that includes measures to remove the *vicus* (the civilian settlement outside the fort) from cultivation, clear scrub to prevent root damage and repair an eroded section of the ramparts.

more than £90 million had been spent on 'historic environment features'. This included restoring some 7 million metres of traditional boundaries, more than 96,400 ha of parklands, in excess of 2,800 historic farm buildings and the protection of 132,200 ha of archaeological features, through measures such as scrub control.

Environmental Stewardship

In March 2005 a new agri-environment scheme, 'Environmental Stewardship' (ES, <http://www.defra.gov.uk/erdp/schemes/es/default.htm>), was launched in England, replacing the 'classic' agri-environment schemes – Countryside Stewardship (CSS) and the Environmentally Sensitive Areas (ESA). This marked a significant shift in emphasis. Instead of offering grants only as incentives to farmers to *change* farming practices to safeguard and manage environmental features, the new scheme rewards farmers for *undertaking* good environmental practices. It operates on two levels – a 'broad and shallow' entry-level scheme (ELS) available to all farmers, achieving a basic level of environmental management; and a competitive, higher-level scheme (HLS), for those delivering more demanding environmental enhancements. HLS is 'targeted' at key features and areas that have been identified as priorities through national, regional and local consultation with stakeholders – including historic-environment partners.

ES is designed to provide an integrated, 'multiple-benefit' approach to land management and has five primary objectives that

clearly recognise the potential for the scheme delivering benefits to the rural historic environment and the wider cultural landscape:

- wildlife conservation
- protection of the historic environment
- maintenance and enhancement of landscape quality and character
- promotion of public access and understanding
- natural resource protection.

In addition it has two secondary objectives:

- flood management
- genetic conservation.

Applicants to both the ELS and HLS choose 'options', which have clearly defined 'prescriptions' identifying the work or actions that a land manager needs to take. These are linked to 'indicators of success' that are specific, measurable outcomes.

The new scheme contains a much broader suite of options specifically designed to protect the historic environment. These include protecting archaeological sites in grassland, taking archaeological sites out of cultivation or restricting cultivation depth and maintaining weatherproof traditional farm buildings. Capital items available in HLS also enable the restoration of designed landscapes and non-domestic historic buildings and structures. Importantly, many of the options are designed to benefit more than one environmental interest. For example, options for the maintenance or restoration of hedgerows or boundary walls will help protect and conserve the historic environment, landscape character and biodiversity.

Raising awareness among land managers

The mechanisms in place for delivering the scheme increase awareness and understanding of the historic environment within the farming community. For the first time, land managers are made aware of known historic environment sites on their holding and are required, through scheme conditions, to protect these sites throughout the life of the agreement regardless of whether they choose an option to manage that feature. The information provided includes regionally as well as nationally important and designated historic features.

The more competitive HLS requires applicants to provide an audit of all environmental features on their holding – including historic environment features such as archaeological monuments, non-domestic historic buildings and designed landscapes – in a ‘Farm Environment Plan’ (FEP). The FEP holds data on every land parcel on the holding, including information on land use, the condition of identified features and recommendations for their management. Local authority historic environment professionals are formally consulted as part of the FEP process and play a critical part in providing information and advice on managing relevant aspects of the historic environment on a holding. Natural England also has a team of in-house Regional Historic Environment Advisers who help ensure that agreements offer the greatest value for money for all environmental interests and overcome potential conflicts in any proposed management.

Collecting this information is useful for several reasons – it enables both applicants and Natural England advisers to monitor the condition of features and to ensure that any options chosen do not damage historic features. It also leads to the discovery of new features, which is proving particularly important in relation to unlisted historic buildings, and allows correction of errors in HER data.

Successes

The government’s objective is to get 60 per cent of all agricultural land into the entry-level scheme by the end of 2007, and so far uptake has been good with. More than one year from the launch of ES, we are starting to see historic-environment benefits. By the 1 February 2007, a total of 3,316 ELS and HLS agreements included ‘historic environment’ options, covering an area of more than 56,450 ha and committing over £11.5 million to HLS work over 10 years. The most popular option is currently for managing ‘Archaeological Features on Grassland’; however the ‘Maintenance of

Weatherproof Traditional Farm Buildings’ option, newly available in June 2006, has already proved to be a success with 276 agreements now including one or more buildings and a total ground-floor area of more than 136,500 square metres being maintained.

The future

Many historic sites are already benefiting from the ‘classic’ agri-environment schemes but many more lie on holdings within schemes, without being actively managed. This demonstrates the potential for better, more joined-up, heritage management if these agreements come into Environmental Stewardship. In 2005, more than 40 per cent of all Registered Parks and Gardens, 37 per cent of Scheduled Monuments, 34 per cent of all World Heritage Sites, and 28 per cent of Registered Battlefields fell wholly or partially within existing agreement land. The importance of agri-environment schemes to the ongoing protection of the rural historic environment cannot be overstated – a fact which is expected to be recognised in the forthcoming Heritage White Paper.

Building value in the landscape

Sarah Tunnicliffe

Rural and Environmental Policy Adviser, English Heritage

Traditional farm buildings are a major contributor to the distinctive local character of rural landscapes and can be an important economic asset for farm businesses. Maintenance and repair of these historic buildings not only sustains the appearance of landscapes, but can also deliver important benefits to local economies.

Over the last two years English Heritage and Defra, in partnership with the Lake District and Yorkshire Dales National Park Authorities, have commissioned research to evaluate the social, economic and public benefits of publicly funded repairs to traditional farm buildings in both National Parks.

The Lake District project focused on the period 1998 to 2004, during which time Defra’s grant-aid to owners of traditional farm buildings through the Environmentally Sensitive Area (ESA) Scheme was more than £6.2 million. The project sought to rigorously define the additional benefits delivered by this repair programme alongside the important heritage conservation dividends that were the primary objective of the work. These additional benefits included the creation of employment, inputs to



© Robert White, YDNPA
Field barn at Healaugh, Swaledale, during repairs under an Environmentally Sensitive Area Conservation Plan.

the local economy, gains to farm businesses and landscape enhancement from the perspective of residents and visitors, as well as the development of an important skill base in traditional-building repair techniques.

The study demonstrated that between 25 and 30 full-time equivalent jobs had been created in the local economy, at least half of which were generated through direct employment on traditional farm building projects. Allowing for direct, indirect and induced effects, the scheme resulted in a total injection of £8.5 million into the local economy; every £1 of public expenditure on farm-building repair under the scheme was calculated to result in a total output within the ESA of £2.49.

Following the Lake District research, work began in 2006 on a project to examine the socio-economic benefits of repairs to historic farm buildings and boundary walls in the Yorkshire Dales National Park between 1998 and 2004. The research applied the same methodology as the Lake District study but considered a variety of funding programmes, including the ESA, and the National Park Authority's own Farm Conservation Scheme and Barns and Walls Conservation Scheme. Once again, the study demonstrated the delivery of important collateral benefits alongside core conservation objectives. During the study period, public investment in conservation work totalled £6.1m, as a result of which more than 515 buildings and 190 km of dry-stone walling were restored and 95 per cent of the repaired buildings put back to productive use. This investment generated over £7m in the local economy, £1.65 and £1.92 for every £1 of grant provided, and up to 37 full-time equivalent jobs. Although these figures seem lower than in

the Lake District, this is because several beneficiary market towns lie outside the National Park boundary. When the analysis was extended to the wider local area (which encompasses a 5-mile buffer zone containing a number of market towns) the results are substantial – the number of full-time equivalent jobs created by the works rises to 74 and between £7.08 and £9.12 m in investment into the wider economy is stimulated specifically by work to this unique built heritage.

Copies of the full socio-economic reports are available at www.helm.org.uk

Beating the Bounds: communities and landscape

Jane Golding

Outreach Officer, National Monuments Record, English Heritage

By working with communities, the National Monuments Record (NMR) aims to help people use archive sources to learn from and enjoy the historic environment. Recent projects in Swindon and Lancaster have enabled local residents to explore the history and development of their communities in response to urban growth from the late-Victorian period onwards. Now the NMR has transferred the focus of its outreach work to a rural setting; Beating the Bounds examines the landscape development of several adjoining parishes within the Vale of White Horse, Oxfordshire, from the late Bronze Age to the present day.

The project is run in partnership with the Vale and Downland Museum, a thriving community museum in the historic market town of Wantage, Oxfordshire. The town

Using resources from the National Monuments Record at the Vale and Downland Museum, Wantage, Oxfordshire

© English Heritage/NMR



developed as a spring-line settlement at the foot of the Berkshire downs and its parish boundary extends over some 9.5 km, from the downs in the south to the clay vale in the north. Narrow elongated strip parishes are a common feature in this part of the Vale of White Horse and a triple land-use enabled settlements to be self-supporting; clay in the vale for meadowland; a shelf of rich, loamy greensand for arable crops; and chalk downlands providing grazing for sheep.

The traditional relationship that enabled communities to be virtually self-sufficient within their immediate rural landscape – not just economically but to meet their spiritual and social welfare too – has altered dramatically. This project is examining current concepts of ‘parish, landscape and community’ through helping local people explore the meaning of boundaries and the significance and value of the land units they define, both in the past and today.

The first phase of the project is engaging groups with existing connections to the Vale and Downland Museum in order to establish the project and its methodology. Future work, involving filming with a local youth group to capture current views on parish and community, will aim to widen participation to those sectors of the community not currently represented. Through this project the NMR is trialling the use of an on-line tool-kit that will enable community groups to combine images, text, sound and film in a digital story of their investigation.

The project makes use of both fieldwork and documentary research and helps participants explore a wide range of evidence. Working

together in small groups, they investigate areas of the parish boundary using the resources of the NMR and locally held material. Examples of investigations include: the identification in the landscape of a disputed mill-site, recorded in 1086; querying the accepted line of a Roman road; and researching how a failed settlement came to be divided between two adjoining parishes. Recent changes in landscape are also noted. A comparison of 1940s air photographs, held by the NMR, with the landscape today, illustrates a significant loss of ridge and furrow and other archaeological evidence due to modern agricultural practices.

Beating the Bounds is helping communities in the Vale of White Horse to engage with their local rural landscape intellectually and physically. Here, landscape history is not delivered by experts but is drawn together by local people through a process of investigation and reappraisal, enabling them to value and share the meaning and significance of their rural cultural and natural heritage.

Aggregates Levy Sustainability Fund

Sarah Cole

Aggregates Levy Sustainability Fund Adviser, English Heritage

Aggregates extraction (such as sand, gravel and crushed rock) represents the most common type of quarrying in the England, the UK consuming some 240 million tonnes annually. It is inevitable that this will impact on the historic environment.

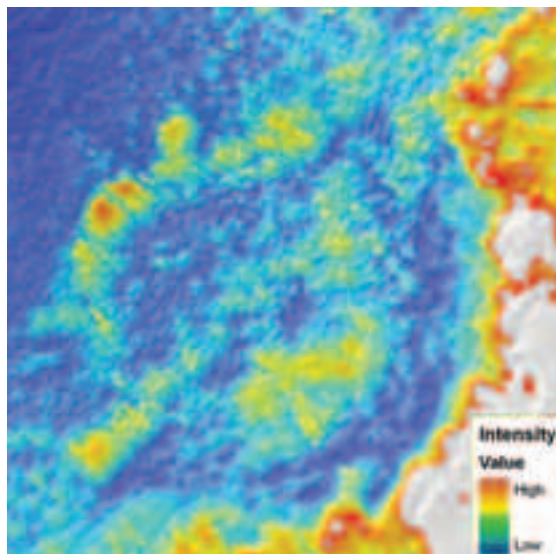
RURAL LANDSCAPES

In 2002 the Aggregates Levy Sustainability Fund (ALSF) was introduced by Defra to provide resources to address the environmental costs of this extraction; English Heritage was appointed as one of the lead distribution bodies of the fund. Run by a small team connected to the Historic Environment Enabling Programme, the English Heritage ALSF has to date distributed over £19 million to more than 200 projects nationally.

All projects address one or other of two objectives: promoting environmentally friendly extraction and addressing the environmental impacts of past aggregates extraction. Additionally, projects address English Heritage's own key priorities, focusing on the following areas:

- developing the capacity to manage aggregate extraction landscapes in the future
- delivering to public and professional audiences the full benefits of knowledge gained through past work in advance of aggregates extraction
- reducing the physical impacts of current extraction where these lie beyond current planning controls and the normal obligations placed on minerals operators
- addressing the effects of old mineral planning permissions
- promoting understanding of the conservation issues arising from the impacts of aggregates extraction on the historic environment.

One of the most important elements of the English Heritage ALSF over the past four years has been the need for good baseline information about the archaeological and historic landscapes in which the extraction takes place. A number of projects have used the opportunity to explore the effectiveness of scientific and technological techniques in the field. One example is the 'Aggregate Extraction in the Ribble Valley'



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The Aggregates Levy Sustainability Fund (ALSF) has given priority to scientific investigation of the archaeological landscapes that lie hidden within areas of the English countryside proposed for gravel extraction. In this image, intensity data from a terrestrial laser scan reveals a prehistoric ring ditch buried beneath Port Meadow in Oxford.

project undertaken by Liverpool University and Oxford Archaeology North. Building on earlier research that identified the paucity of historic environment information for the area in relation to its known aggregate production history, the Ribble Valley project has attempted to address this gap in knowledge. After collating existing archaeological and palaeoenvironmental data and setting it against geological data and current aggregates permission, further multiple lines of evidence were addressed. These included remote sensing, field survey and absolute dating (including radiocarbon and optically stimulated luminescence). The results of these investigations will be collated in a GIS with an accompanying report setting out a framework for understanding the archaeology in the area, thus giving valuable data for future management and minerals planning.

Across the country a number of similar projects have been undertaken to 'Assess the



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Exploring the effectiveness of archaeological remote-sensing techniques. Dr Chris Carey, University of Exeter, collecting *in-situ* soil-moisture readings using a Detla T Devices Theta Probe.

Finds processing session for adults with learning difficulties. The session involved working with a previously unprocessed collection of artefacts from an archaeological site within one of the most intensively quarried areas of Worcestershire.

© Worcestershire County Council



Archaeological Resource' within the aggregate-producing areas of a county. The first such project was undertaken in Gloucestershire by the County Council and has since been repeated in other aggregates-producing counties such as Co Durham, Warwickshire and Worcestershire, with more planned for the future.

Aimed at establishing a coherent evidence-base and thus improving the local Historic Environment Record, these projects all incorporate a rigorous desk-based assessment of existing data collated into a GIS environment to improve future decision-making. In some counties there was an opportunity to enhance the record by carrying out aerial photography mapping (thus helping to accelerate the National Mapping Programme, see Went and Horne, this issue pp 22–3), allowing the identification, interpretation and recording of all probable and possible archaeological features that are visible as cropmarks, soilmarks, parchmarks and earthworks. The data collected by these assessments have also been a valuable tool in the production of Local Minerals Plans. Outreach follow-ups have ensured that the public, as well as curators, have the chance to benefit equally.

Through the ALSF English Heritage has been in a position to fund a number of projects that attempt to assess, refine and develop different methods of prospection and investigation, in order to increase predictive accuracy, and thus minimise risk to industry and the historic environment. One good example is the 'Airborne LiDAR Backscattered Laser Intensity Prediction of Organic Preservation' project undertaken by Birmingham University. This investigated the potential of backscattered laser intensity data from airborne laser altimetry to remotely determine soil properties, including organic content

and moisture levels. This information can then be used to identify areas of preferential organic preservation within regions affected by aggregate extraction and provide information related to wider issues of catchment management (eg the impacts of changing hydrological conditions). A generic good-practice guidance document is being produced from the project, to ensure knowledge transfer.

The understanding and involvement of the public in the archaeology and history of aggregates-producing areas is a central tenet of the ALSF. Many projects have thus been designed with outreach and education at their core.

Following on from their Resource Assessment project Worcestershire County Council have been involving the local community, particularly those normally excluded from archaeological activities, with their 'Unlocking the Past' project. Through workshops for adults with learning difficulties the project has aimed to raise awareness of the important contributions archaeological discoveries made during aggregate extraction have made to our understanding of the past.

For the future the aim is to continue to build on the developments and technological advances already made. Many projects, such as the Resource Assessments and those with an outreach focus, have potential to be rolled out in different areas of the country, and new projects will hopefully be taken forward.

At the time of writing the ALSF has been extended for a further year and is now due to end in March 2008. For more information regarding the fund and the projects already funded, please visit www.english-heritage.org.uk/alsf