



# Vale of Pickering

## Statement of Significance



ENGLISH HERITAGE

Report prepared for English Heritage (Yorkshire and Humber Region)

## Contents

Introduction	3
Summary Statement of Significance	5
Summary	13
Landscape Description	17
Evidential Value	20
Historical Value	28
Natural Value	45
Aesthetic Value	51
Communal Value	54
At Risk Statement	59
What Next?	64
List of individuals and organisations consulted for the production of the document	65
Directory of organisations with interests in the Vale of Pickering	65
Bibliography	67
List of photographs	68

## Introduction

The *Vale of Pickering Historic Environment Management Framework Project* was initiated by English Heritage (Yorkshire and Humber Region) in response to a number of factors and issues:

- The immediate problems raised by the desiccation of the peats at the eastern end of the Vale, at the Early Mesolithic site of Star Carr.
- The realisation that the exceptional archaeological landscape identified between Rillington and Sherburn cannot adequately be managed through current approaches to designation.
- The incremental increase in the number of agencies and projects with an interest in the Vale but lacking concerted action or agreement about the qualities that make the Vale of Pickering a unique landscape.
- The need for an agreed, clear statement on the special character, qualities and attributes of the Vale which can be incorporated into policy documents

For English Heritage this Statement of Significance is the first stage in developing an overall strategy for the Vale of Pickering. Once this document has been agreed and endorsed by its partners and co-contributors, the intention is that it will be followed by an Action Plan that will:

- Illustrate how the special qualities of the Vale can be enhanced through specific projects
- Seek funding for and propose specific projects and initiatives.

This document presents a summary of significance for the Vale of Pickering.

‘Significance’ can have a wide range of different meanings, and can encompass many different things and places. This document takes the definition of significance from the English Heritage Conservation Principles, as “the sum of the cultural and natural heritage values of a place”, where value is defined as: “an aspect of worth or importance, here attached by people to qualities of places”.

Significance is assessed in a number of different ways, by considering evidential, historical, natural, aesthetic and communal values. English Heritage Conservation Principles define these as:

*Evidential value is value deriving from the potential of a place to yield evidence about past human activity.*

*Historical value is value deriving from the ways in which past people, events and aspects of life can be connected through a place to the present*

*Aesthetic value is concerned with the value deriving from the ways in which people draw sensory and intellectual stimulation from a place*

*Communal value is value deriving from the meanings of a place for the people who relate to it, or for whom it figures in their collective experience or memory*

In addition natural value has been included. For the purpose of this document this is defined as:

*Natural value is value deriving from the biodiversity of a place.*

This document is intended to raise awareness of the significance of the Vale of Pickering. It is intended to be used by many different organisations, from planners through to schools and individuals. The summary provided by this document will be important for all future projects involving stakeholders within the Vale of Pickering. The Statement of Significance might be used as a reference, or as an inspiration to future projects, for example in planning projects that may make use of the economic potential of the significance of the Vale of Pickering.

A large number of stakeholders was consulted for this document, with organisations and individuals consulted from a range of different backgrounds and interests, including cultural and natural heritage, planning and other relevant stakeholders. A list of those consulted is included at the end of the document. This is the first stage in this project and it is hoped future projects will involve a broader range of potential stakeholders, including landowners, estates, farmers and parishes.

Undertaken at such a large landscape level, the assessment of significance must by necessity be one that summarises and synthesises the significance of a multitude of sites, heritage and natural assets, whilst being of sufficient depth to represent the chronological sequence of human activity within the Vale of Pickering. As such, it is concerned not only with the designated 'official' assets, but also with assets of significance on a broader scale. Most problematic is understanding the different scales of significance (from local, regional, national, European and international) without assigning value, particularly as local value is often more significant than international values. In addition, different systems of designation exist across natural and cultural heritage, which complicates comparison of these various types of designated asset. As such this document presents significance in a number of different ways, using maps, photographs and text (summarising values and chronology) alongside lists of place names, river names, and words associated with the Vale of Pickering. At this stage the question is not so much 'how' significant, but agreeing a set of significances for the Vale of Pickering as a whole.

## **Summary Statement of Significance**

### **Essential to an understanding of significance**

- The essential element is the topography, shape and form of the Vale of Pickering. The integrity of its physical form allows us to understand and visualise its geological sequence and development.
- The distinctive topography is essential in understanding how people interact with the landscape, with parish and estate morphology linked to transects through the multiple environments and habitats, from wetland, to dryland, to valley edges.
- The remarkable and complete sequence of human activity identified within the Vale of Pickering starts in the late Palaeolithic, with a human presence in the landscape in all subsequent periods through to the present day.
- The distinct human, natural and cultural interface that makes the Vale of Pickering 'special' is a quality that chimes well with the UNESCO description of a 'cultural landscape' – as a distinct geographical area "...represent[ing] the combined work of nature and of man."

### **Important to an understanding of significance**

- The scale, complexity and density of human occupation over the last 10,000 years which has been illustrated by the largest contiguous block of intensive landscape survey in Europe.
- The quality and extent of the combination of wetland archaeology (with preservation of organics and wetland deposits), alongside dryland/sandland archaeology (with deposits preserved beneath blown sands) is important.
- The geodiversity of the Vale of Pickering is highly visible – not least through its buildings and industries. The Vale has significant resources of aggregates, limestone, calcareous sandstone, chalk quarries, and inland gas. The late quaternary geology of the Vale of Pickering is of importance in understanding the sequence of glaciation and deglaciation of the whole area.
- The Vale of Pickering has a complex hydrography with a combination of natural water courses, land drainage, and springline aquifers making it susceptible to flooding. The wetland deposits within the Vale of Pickering are of significance for carbon capture and storage.

### **Part of an understanding of significance**

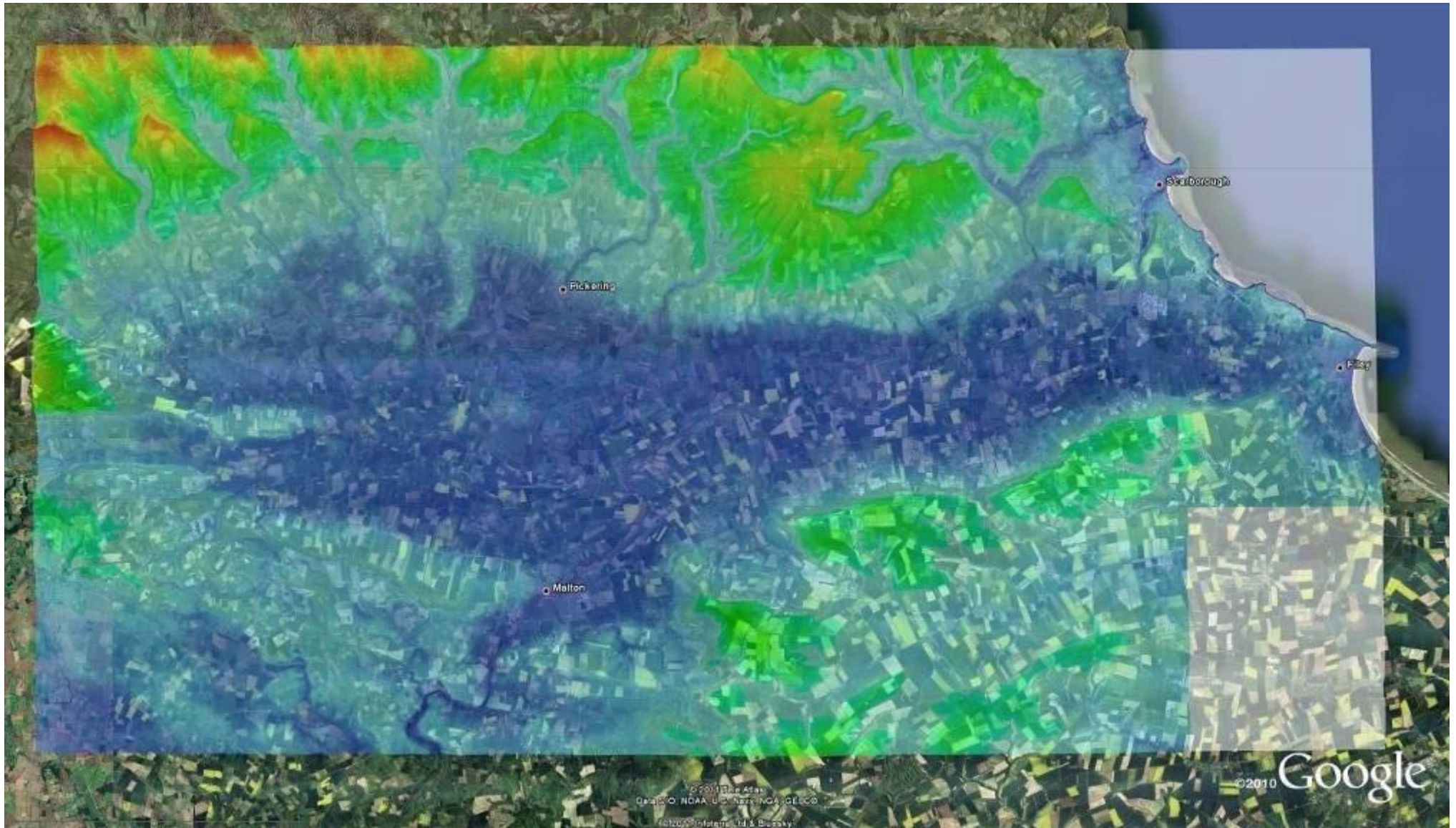
- The archaeology is both high status and mundane, recording the everyday lives of people in the past. Iconic material culture from the Vale of Pickering includes Mesolithic flints and antler frontlets from Star Carr, the Folkton drums, one of very few excavated Beaker kilns, important Roman ceramics and high status objects, and a fully excavated Anglo-Saxon cemetery and its associated settlement.
- The Vale of Pickering contains the important archaeological sites of Star Carr, Flixton, West Heselton, and Staple Howe, Beadlam, Rillington, Malton and Norton.
- The Vale of Pickering has considerable biodiversity and is home to a number of target wetland and farmland bird species.

- The Vale of Pickering is the location (and possible focus) of a large number of very early Anglo-Saxon ecclesiastical establishments, and the kingdom of Deira.
- The oldest privately owned cricket pitch, one of very few inland 'links' golf courses, and one of the earliest zoological theme parks in the UK are all situated within the Vale of Pickering. These amenity sites demonstrate the significance of the development of tourism and leisure. The Vale of Pickering is a significant 'routeway' through to the Yorkshire Wolds, Moors and Coast.
- The fields of geology, aviation, archaeology and landscape studies have developed within the Vale of Pickering.
- The Vale of Pickering has intensive agricultural use of mixed arable and pasture, including food and energy crop production, alongside market gardens and nurseries.

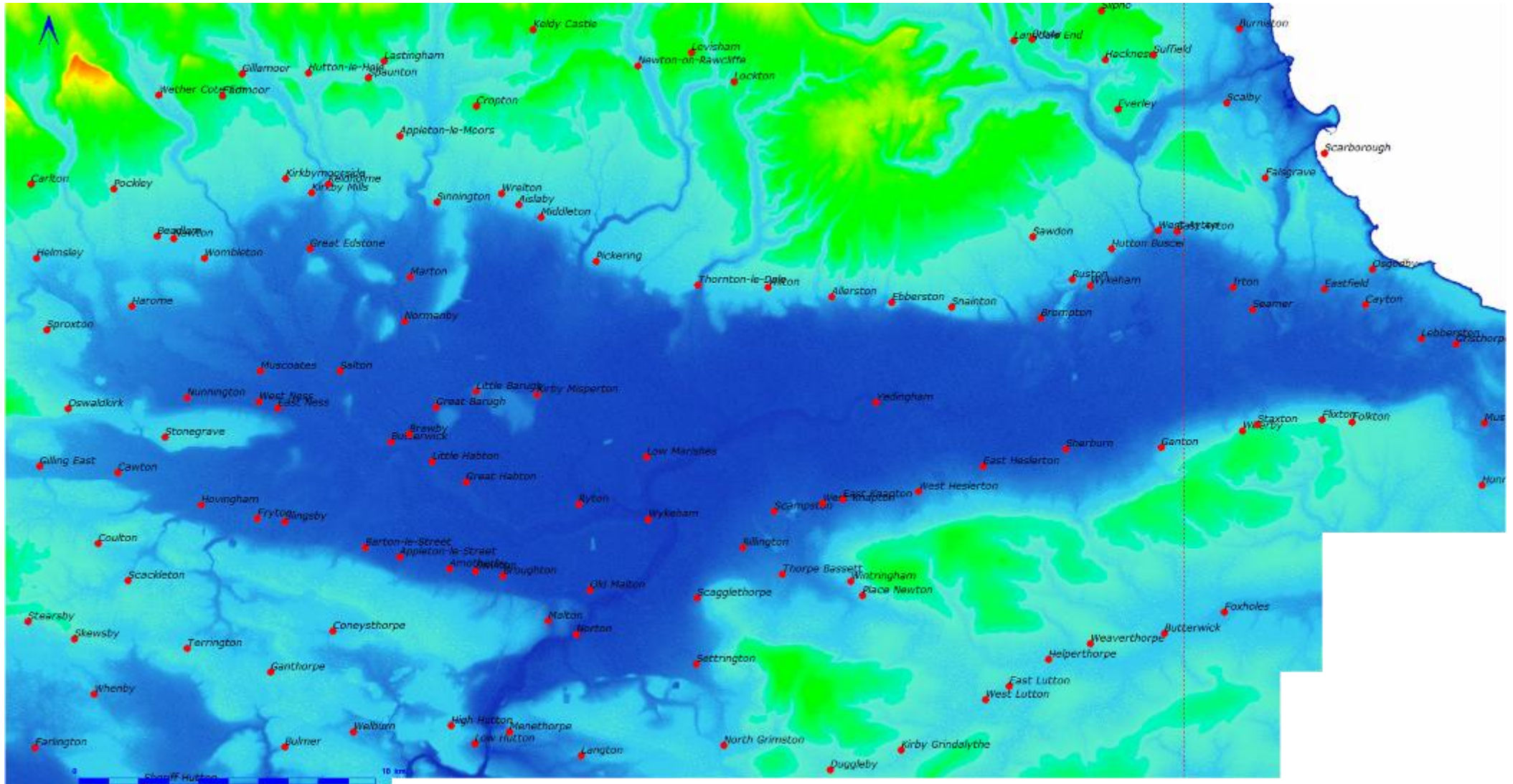
#### **Detracts from the understanding of significance**

- The evidential, historical, natural, aesthetic and communal significance of the Vale of Pickering has often been overlooked by the more dramatic and picturesque landscapes of the North York Moors, Yorkshire Wolds and Howardian Hills.
- The apparent 'blank' in statutory protection, general knowledge and aesthetic appreciation is in contrast to the increasing understanding of archaeological and historical sequence, and cultural landscape values of the Vale of Pickering.
- Intellectual access to the Vale of Pickering and its significance is poor. There is no location that provides access or interpretation of the cultural and natural significance of the Vale of Pickering.

Over 30 years of research within the Vale of Pickering has led Professor Dominic Powlesland to state that "The Vale of Pickering is the one place in the UK where we have enough knowledge to ask real, big questions about the past."

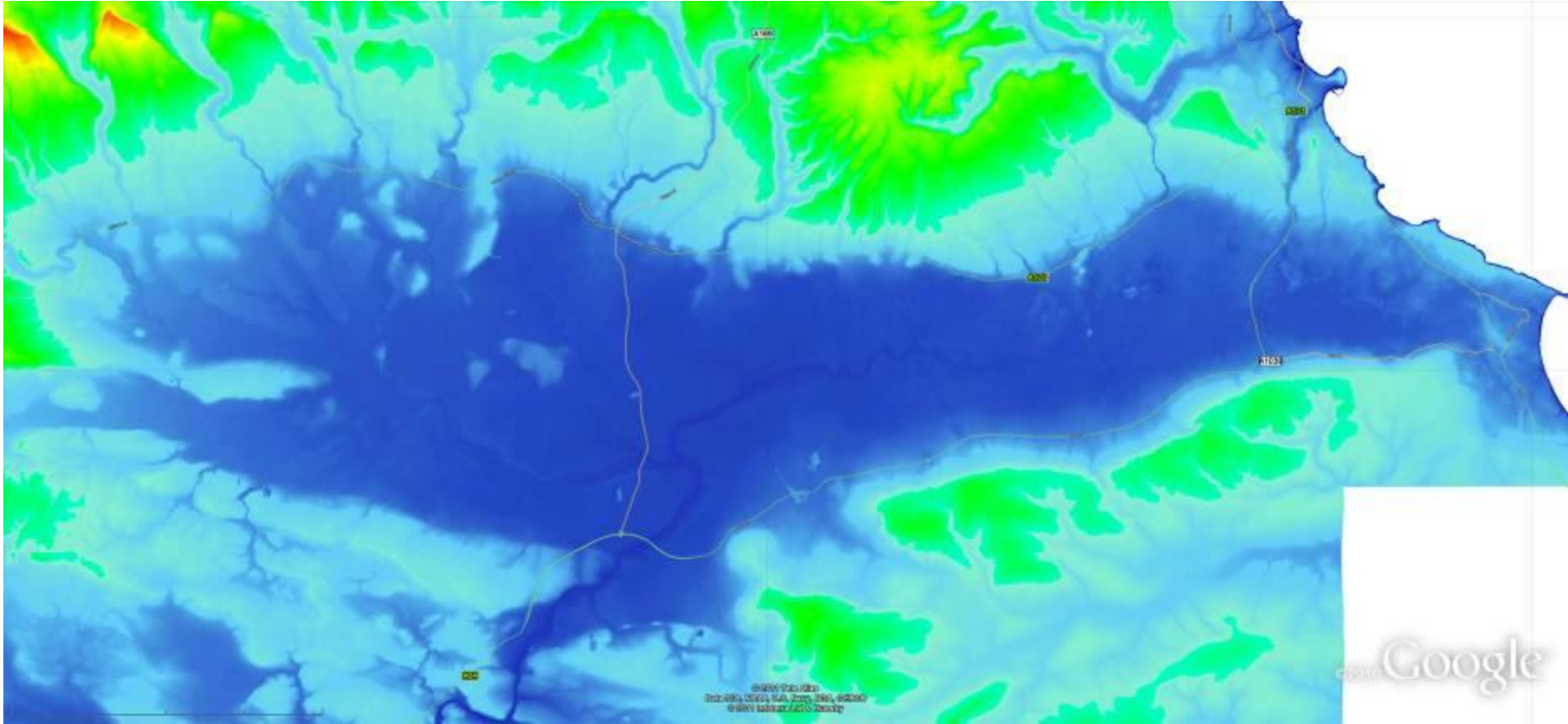


Vale of Pickering, elevation model overlay combined in Google Earth (LRC).

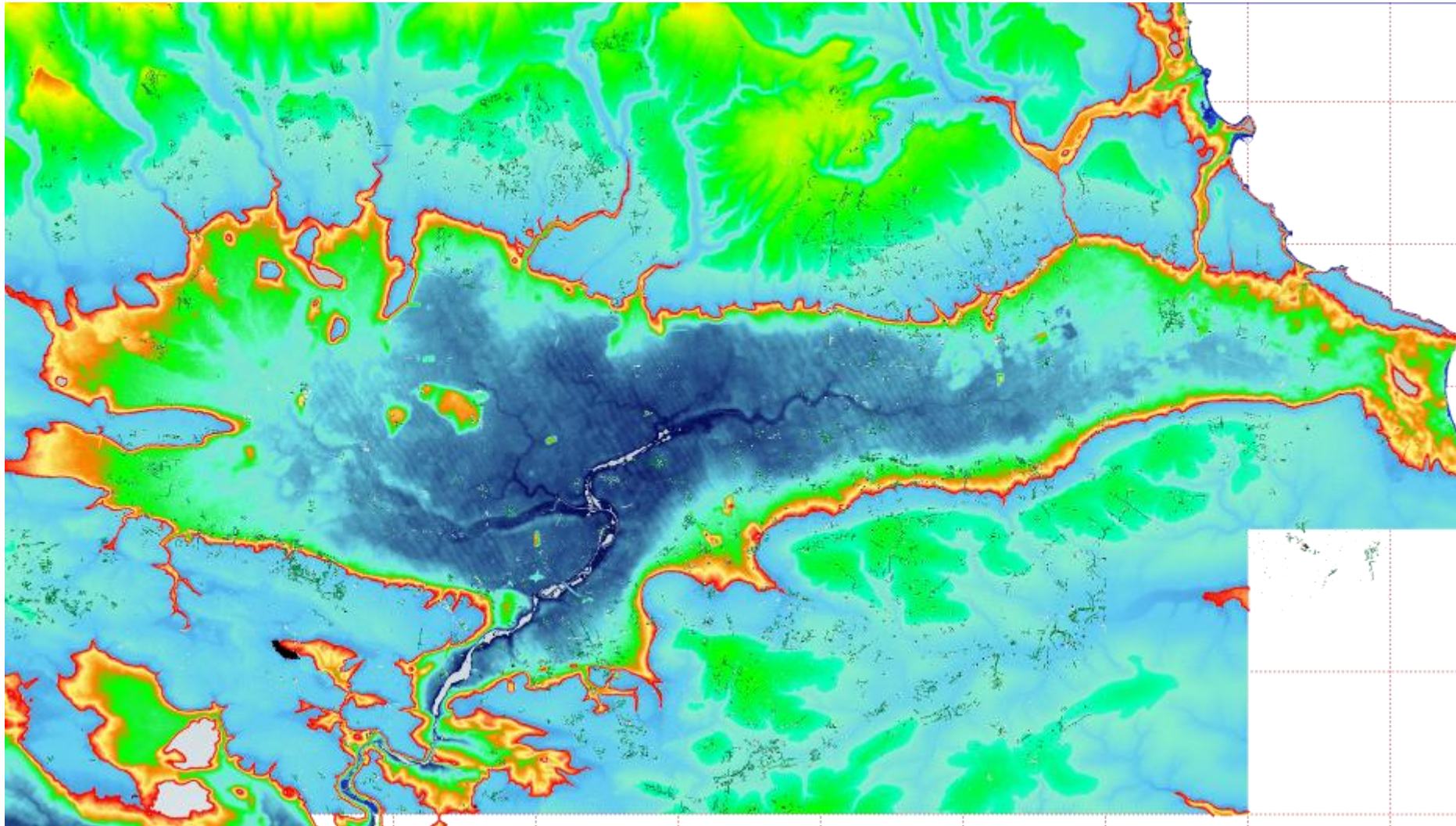


Vale of Pickering, showing present-day settlement and relief model (combined in Google Earth (LRC)).

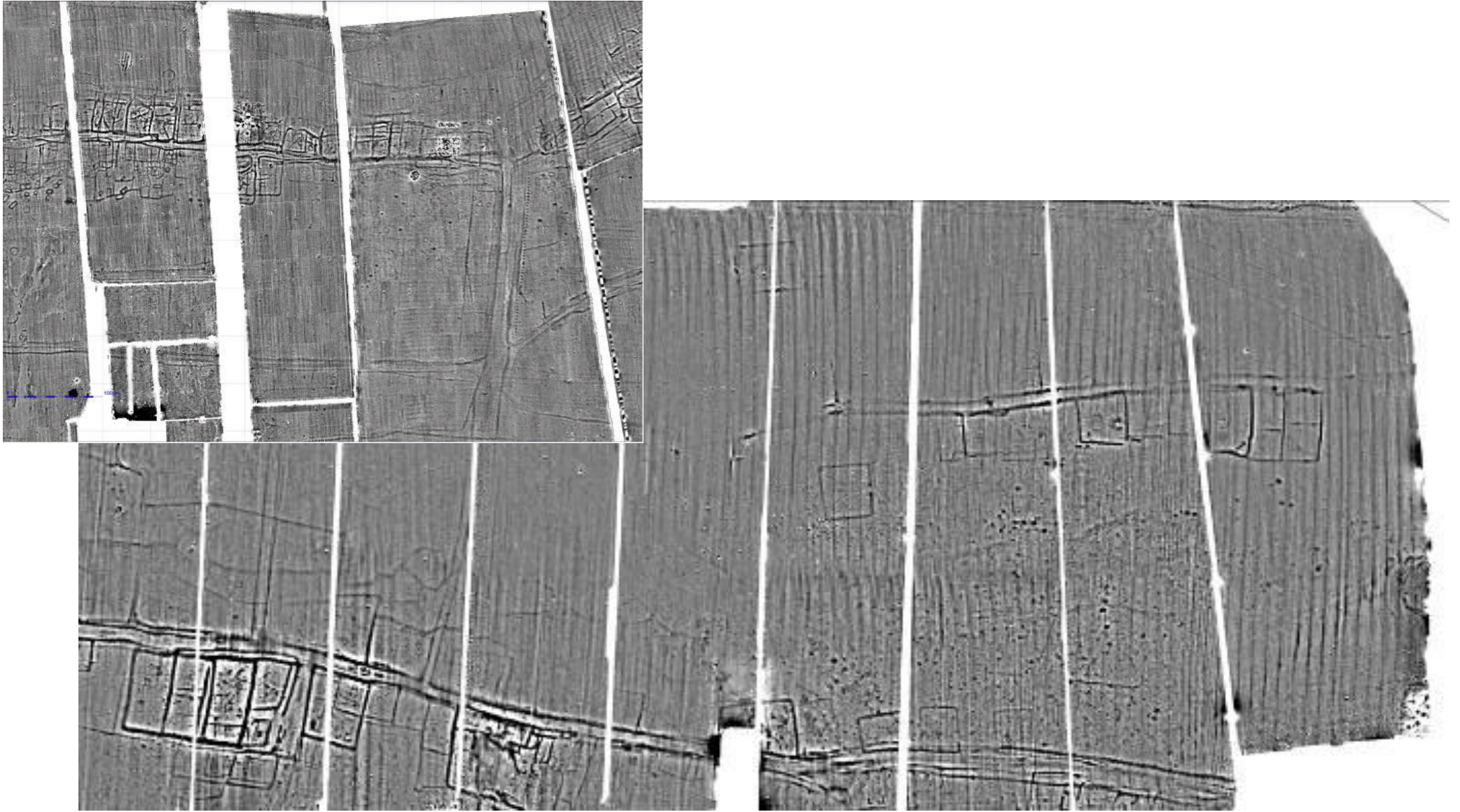




Vale of Pickering showing extent of former lake (LRC).



Vale of Pickering enhanced 15-50m contour, showing mapped cropmarks (LRC).



The exceptional density of returns from the geophysical survey on the southern side of the Vale of Pickering shown in examples of the LRC 'Wallpaper'.



Archaeology Agriculture Arable **Aggregates** Access Archives Art Beaker Building Birds Blown sand Channel Crop mark Community Conservation Churches Chalk **Climate change** Drainage Dendrochronology **Designed landscapes** Dredging Development Environmental stewardship Economy **Environmental deposits** Energy crops Education Fisheries **Farming** Flooding Fens Forestry Fieldwork Geophysics Groundwater **Geology Gravels** Historic environment records **Heritage** Hedgerows Holocene Hansons Icehouses **Internal drainage board** Industry Irrigation Icesheet Jurassic Jobs Knowledge clay Knights templar **Landscape** Late glacial Lakes Lacustrine Lithics Ladder settlement Leisure Landscape Research Centre **Land Management** Lime mortar Marshes McCains Moraines **Museums** Management Mesolithic Moors Monasteries Neolithic **Nature conservation** Nitrates Nighthawks Organics **Ornithology** Opportunities Outreach Pigs **Peat** Pottery production Parkland Phosphates Paleolithic **People** Population Parish plan Quaternary Quernstones Quiet Quantification **Quarry** Quality of life Quality of data Romans **Resources** Research Rivers Railways Roads Residents Resolution **Records** Star Carr **Settlements** Schools **Seaside** Sewage **Sand** Sustainable **Tourism** Training Tractors **Trees** Upper Palaeolithic Underground University **Undesignated** Unprotected Unknown **Understanding** Urbanisation Villages Villas Vikings Vernacular Windfarm **Water** Windblown sand Wolds Waste **Wetland** **Weather** X-ray Xenoliths Younger Dryas **Young people** Yacht Zoo

Vale of Pickering A-Z of significance and value (from contributions to stakeholder meetings undertaken during this project).

## Summary



The Vale of Pickering retains remarkable integrity, situated between the Yorkshire Wolds, North Yorkshire Moors, Howardian Hills and East Coast. The discrete and well defined cultural landscape of the Vale of Pickering is of regional, national and international significance.

The Vale of Pickering covers an area of c. 500 sq km. It is a place with both physical and intellectual 'edges'. There is a distinct sense of place: we instinctively know this was a lake in the past, with the shallow u-shaped valley edges and bottom which formerly contained the glacial lake. Its geological sequence on either side suggests the meeting point of northern and southern Britain.

The discoveries within the Vale of Pickering contribute to our understanding of the human story of the past. William Buckland's discoveries in Kirkdale Cave, and William Smith's *Geological Map of Britain* are important in the history of science. In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, work in the Vale of Pickering has defined and advanced the disciplines of landscape archaeology, Mesolithic studies, and the value of 'embeddedness' of projects within rural communities. It is the one place in the UK where the gathering of knowledge in the latter half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century lets us begin to understand a continuous sequence of human activity since the late Palaeolithic.

Study undertaken on a landscape scale by the Landscape Research Centre (LRC) demonstrates the spatial and chronological intensity of the human use of the landscape in the past. This work has pioneered approaches beyond the notion of 'site' and conventional chronological boundaries. More than 30 years of intensive research and survey focused on the same 20 x 10km area within the Vale of Pickering has identified the scale, complexity and density of human occupation over the last 10,000 years. This 'pinprick' of understanding reveals a density and longevity of human activity that has far surpassed any previously estimated.

It is within this context of continuity that 'key' sites such as Star Carr and Flixton, and high profile 'finds' such as Gristhorpe Man and the Folkton drums must be understood. Recent archaeological work at Star Carr suggests that the notion of a 'sense of place' within the Vale of Pickering may have been established as early as c. 9,000 BC.



This 'sense of place' is perhaps due to the distinctive 'traces' of the earlier glacial lake within the enclosed valley, or the presence of the 'backward' flowing river, or the co-existence of different habitats with the wetland areas in the valley bottom interconnected with the uplands on the northern, western and southern slopes and the coast at the east.

After the 19<sup>th</sup> century, manmade interventions 'conquered' this special quality, creating the agricultural landscape that today characterises the Vale of Pickering. The complex river system and 19<sup>th</sup> century agricultural drainage network snakes through the patchwork of arable, pasture, woodland, designed parkland, hamlets, villages and market towns that characterise the Vale of Pickering today. As a result from the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century there is a clear separation between the human and environmental relationships within the Vale of Pickering.



One of the greatest threats to the significance of the Vale of Pickering is its low status and lack of visibility in intellectual discourses and current statutory lists. Quite simply, there is little upstanding or extant that a casual viewer can visit, and the lack of physical form means that much of its significance is intangible - and therefore vulnerable. As a landscape it has perhaps been forgotten.



This has an impact on understanding land-use and the nature of development both inside and outside the planning system, and on other issues such as heritage crime. This is especially so as it is hard to conceptualise cultural and natural significance across the landscape rather than on a known site-by-site or known species-by-species level. As the various disciplines have been created, defined and perhaps shaped by the Vale of Pickering we must now take the opportunity to create and define sustainable methods of understanding and protecting significance at a landscape scale.



The lessons learnt from the Vale of Pickering, suggesting how and in what ways humans have used and shaped the landscape through time, are important to us all.



“This valley bounds North-East Yorkshire on the south and separates it from the Chalk Wolds of the East Riding. More or less enclosed by higher land, it is a low-lying basin, the average altitude of its almost flat floor being less than one hundred feet above sea level. Its length from east to west is about thirty miles, and its width from north to south varies from five to ten miles. The Limestone Hills overlook it on the north; the Howardian Hills on the south-west; and the Chalk Wolds on the south. The Vale narrows toward the east where it debouches on to the coast at Filey Bay. In the west, the narrow Coxwold-Gilling gap, about five miles long by one mile wide, links it to the Vale of York or Mowbray.”

(F. Elgee, 1930. 3).



## Landscape description



The unique topography, shape and form are significant characteristics of the Vale of Pickering. It is a low lying east-west plain, well defined between the coast at Filey to the east, the Hambleton and Howardian Hills to the west, the Yorkshire Wolds to the south, and the Tabular Hills (Corrallian foothills) of the North York Moors to the north.

There is significant variation across the Vale of Pickering and it can usefully be seen as 3 separate geographical zones: the coastal strip; the eastern end of the Vale characterised by surviving peaty soils, canalised water and drainage courses; and the western end of the Vale with more undulating land and complexity of a multitude of water courses. The eastern and western zones are characterised by flat-lying glaciolacustrine clay and sand deposited in the former Lake Pickering which occupied much of the area during and subsequent to the last glaciation around 12,000 years ago.

In addition to its geographical variation, the Vale of Pickering is most often distinguished in 3 topographical zones: the higher ground on the northern, southern and western slopes; the former lake margin; and the Vale bottom. Settlement is predominantly on the northern and southern slopes, with occasional, scattered settlement in the centre. The topographic and geographical variation means the 'concept' of the Vale of Pickering encompasses the slopes on the northern, southern and western sides. This is broader than that defined by the National Character Area, which is defined more by the modern infrastructure of roads than by the shape of the land.

The Vale of Pickering is characterised by flat, open pastures, areas of intensive arable production and more varied, undulating, enclosed, landscapes, with some woodland present at Wykeham, Ayton, and Hovingham. Food production within the Vale of Pickering is significant with the old MAFF agricultural land classification broadly showing Grade 2 land dominating across the northern Vale of Pickering, and Grade 3 widespread across the southern Vale of Pickering and slope of the North York Moors.

The Vale of Pickering is divided between the administrative authorities of Scarborough Borough Council and Ryedale District Council. Both planning authorities have development frameworks and both

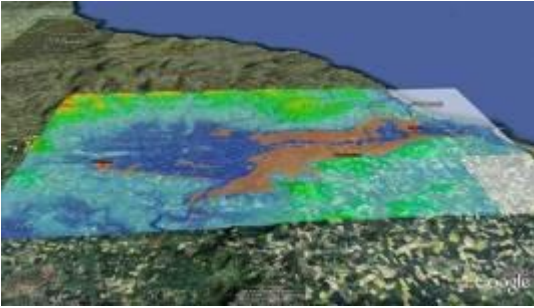


note the potential for heritage and natural assets within their respective areas. The whole area is within North Yorkshire, (created in 1974 from the parts of the North and East Riding previously separated by the River Derwent). North Yorkshire County Council (NYCC) provides statutory and non-statutory services for heritage, ecology, minerals and highways. NYCC hold the historic environment record for North Yorkshire, which includes historic landscape characterisation data.

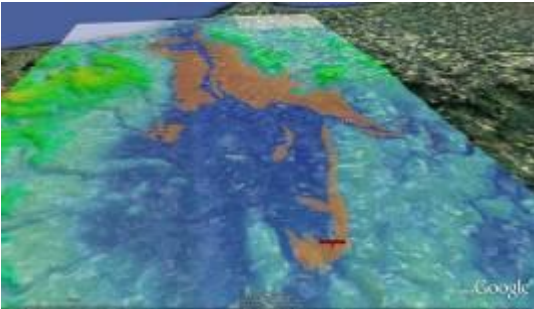
The Vale of Pickering is defined by parish boundaries and the large land-based estates, either wholly or partially within the Vale. The York Diocese has overall responsibility for churches and land, with responsibility for each church residing with the individual PCC. St Peter's Church, Wintringham, and St Andrews, East Heslerton, are in the estate of the Churches Conservation Trust. English Heritage manages properties at Pickering Castle, Helmsley Castle, Scarborough Castle, and the National Trust at Nunnington Hall. Museums exist in Scarborough, Malton, Pickering (Beck Isle Museum), and at Hutton-le-Hole (Ryedale Folk Museum). The latter is located within the North York Moors but its collection contains much material from the Vale of Pickering.

The river Derwent counter-intuitively flows 'backwards' from the North York Moors, through the Vale of Pickering before joining the Ouse at Barmby on the Marsh. The Derwent is a major source of potable water in Yorkshire. Although the abstraction takes place downstream at Elvington most of the water has passed through the Vale of Pickering. Rivers are managed by the Environment Agency. Other statutory bodies participate as and when required within their various roles. Recent collaboration by statutory agencies has been concerned with the objectives for agri-environment stewardship schemes, by highlighting to individual landowners the various ecological and heritage criteria which they fulfil.

Drainage systems, cuts and ditches (which are separate to agricultural field drains) are managed by the Internal Drainage Board. The drainage board remit is to ensure efficient drainage of the agricultural land within the drainage district. For historical reasons, the drainage boards are based at Cundalls estate agency in Malton.



Vale of Pickering with elevation model and the distribution of aggregates, shown from south – to – north (LRC).



Vale of Pickering with elevation model and the distribution of aggregates, shown from west – to – east (LRC).



Plot of Geophysical survey East Heselton (LRC).

The 3 internal drainage boards operating in the Vale are the Rye IDB, Yedingham and Muston IDB, and Thornton IDB. Significant drainage works have taken place since the 1970s, this included significant interventions such as new tunnels, pipes and farm access bridges.

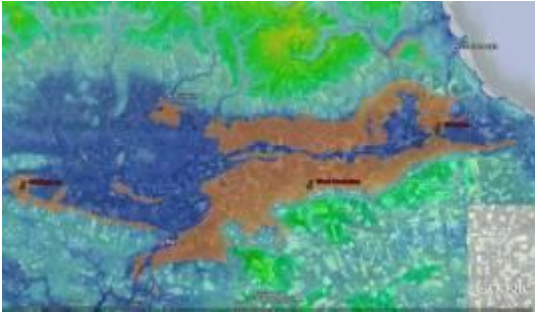
Today a small team works full-time; their main jobs are to clear weeds and built up silts. The drainage boards are funded by rate payers within the drainage district; all those with property have a right to sit on and be part of the drainage board's decision making. Boards sit quarterly to decide upon work programmes.

Fisheries within the Vale of Pickering consist of freshwater (especially in the river courses at the western end and with commercial fisheries on the River Rye), and lakes (Wykeham). The North & East Yorkshire Ecological Data Centre is a Local Record Centre working to support nature conservation and to inform land management decision making.

The Yorkshire Wildlife Trust has interests within the Vale of Pickering at Ellerburn Bank, Chafer Wood, Burton Riggs, Harland Mount and Filey Dams. The RSPB has more recent engagement through the Cayton and Flixton Carrs Wetland Project. In addition, there are a number of local and regional interest groups for both cultural and natural heritage. For example, geological trails by the North-East Yorkshire Geology Trust have been established at Love Lane, Pickering, Wykeham and Burton Riggs.

Aggregate extraction and the resulting industries are significant throughout the Vale of Pickering, with active quarries at Knapton, Wykeham, West Heselton, Yedingham, Wath and Newbridge (Pickering). In addition, the Vale of Pickering has considerable hydrocarbon potential, with inland gas reservoirs which are tapped at Kirby Misperton, Marishes and Knapton, and at other planned locations.

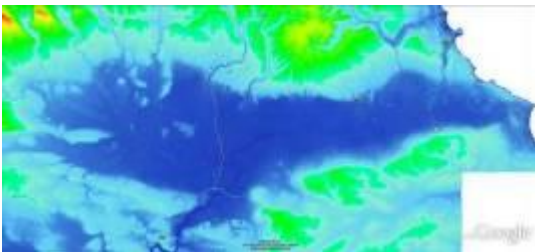
## Evidential Value



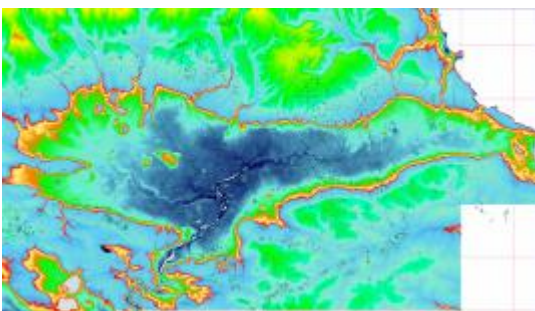
Vale of Pickering with elevation model and distribution of aggregates (LRC).



Vale of Pickering as defined by Landscape Characterisation Area.



Vale of Pickering showing extent of former lake (LRC).



Vale of Pickering enhanced 15-50m contour, showing mapped cropmarks (LRC).

The visual observation of, and feelings aroused by, the enclosed character of the Vale of Pickering contribute significantly to the sense of place. It is possible to look down into the Vale and imagine it as a landscape of ice and lakes. From the valley bottom, the enclosed nature of the landscape forms a unique sense of place. As such, the shape and form of the Vale of Pickering encompassing the slopes on three sides, has created an enclosed valley and this perhaps led to the creation of a sense of place by the earliest inhabitants of the landscape.

The landscape is navigated by roads, rivers, dykes, crossings and bridges. It is circumnavigated on the slopes on the southern, western and northern edges by the modern road network. This allows observation and comprehension of the integrity of the landscape shape and form. The road network occasionally traverses north-south, crossing the former wetlands on the higher glacial moraines at Sherburn and Seamer on the eastern side of the Vale, and on the western side of the Vale through the extant Kimmeridge clay outcrops at Kirby Misperton and Great Barugh, and at Yedingham across the River Derwent where the modern road bridge is probably on a much earlier crossing point.

In the past the Vale of Pickering was a densely utilised human landscape. This is perhaps a result of the shape and form of the valley, which is much wider than a conventional river valley. Archaeologically the most significant aspect of this unique landscape is the combination of wetland archaeology (with preservation of organics and wetland deposits), alongside dryland/sandland archaeology (with deposits preserved beneath blown sands). The lack of visibility of this archaeology on the land surface has resulted in the development of pioneering approaches to its retrieval and survey, in particular the type, complexity and length of study undertaken.

The geology of the Vale of Pickering forms the background for its subsequent development, with limestones on the northern and western boundaries, chalk on the southern boundary and clays at the coast. The geodiversity of a number of sites is important. For example, Wath Quarry shows the discontinuity that occurs between the massive bedded Malton Oolite and the overlying reef carbonates of the Coral Rag. At the western end, the former Betton Farm quarries (East Ayton) have important gastropod fossil evidence.



Archaeological research in the Vale of Pickering has pioneered approaches to the study of landscape that move the discipline beyond the notion of 'site' and conventional chronological boundaries. The significance of this understanding of the landscape is of importance locally, nationally and internationally. However this significance is underplayed given the nature and context of the evidence. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century it is enclosure and drainage that have left the most tangible record on the Vale of Pickering. As such the 'historic' landscape as perceived today is a landscape of just the last 200 years, and in many instances a landscape created within living memory.

Substantial archaeological work has occurred throughout the Vale of Pickering. Over the last 40 years there has been a concentration of research-led archaeology on the southern-side in the sands, gravels and chalks of the Landscape Research Centre (LRC) study area (between Rillington and Ganton), and also at the eastern end of the Valley on the former lake edges (Star Carr, Seamer and Flixton). In addition to work in advance of quarrying, road building and development throughout the Vale of Pickering, there are other occasional research-led excavations at sites such as Beadlam. The archaeological work is undertaken by a number of different charities, universities, commercial field units, research groups and local interest groups such as the archaeological societies in Helmsley and Scarborough. NYCC holds considerable data within the HER for North Yorkshire. Syntheses of archaeological research in the Vale are within *The Historical Atlas of North Yorkshire* (Butlin 2003) and *The Archaeology of Yorkshire: an assessment at the Beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century* (Manby et al 2003).

The mapped evidence comprises the results of air photography and its allied disciplines of ground and airborne remote sensing. These have been a key component of work from the 1970s undertaken by the LRC investigating the area between Ganton and Rillington on the sands, gravels and chalks on the southern side of the Vale of Pickering. This has resulted in the largest contiguous block of intensive landscape survey in Europe. As this evidence is collected digitally, the 'sites' and data are invisible on the ground. However it has been made visible by the LRC 'wallpaper' (a long - up to 8m - print of the plotted geophysical and air-photographic anomalies) and through mechanisms such as Google Earth, and it is a significant resource for all those interested in landscape study.



Aerial photography suggests similar evidence is likely to be encountered elsewhere in the Vale of Pickering. For example, the northern side of the river Derwent between Ayton and Ebberston shows similar returns to the neighbouring southern side. Equally, the area between Malton and Hovingham shows a high density of crop marks. In contrast at the eastern end of the Vale the level of knowledge is less secure: this end of the valley tends to produce fewer crop mark returns as crop mark formation diminishes with proximity to the coast. In addition, the nature of crop marks has changed more recently, with a larger number observed away from the 'prime' spots on the sands and gravels. This suggests there is likely to be a similarly complex sequence of human activity throughout the Vale of Pickering, and that the absence of evidence is merely a reflection of absence of observation.

The results of the landscape-scale survey are just one component of the body of evidence for understanding the significance of the Vale of Pickering. An example of another component is the palaeoenvironmental evidence captured in advance of quarrying at Wykeham Quarry. This evidence is significant in understanding the late Pleistocene and early Holocene environmental change, especially when combined with the understanding we now have of changes within the North Sea basin in Doggerland. It demonstrates the complexity of land formation, change and climate marking the late Pleistocene to Early Holocene transition. The opportunity afforded by archaeological sites within the Vale of Pickering to understand the impacts of changing climate on humans is of international significance.

Archaeological excavation at Star Carr is significant on account of the exceptional organic preservation within waterlogged peat deposits. The remarkable material culture from Star Carr includes barbed points, antler frontlets and beads. At the time of their discovery during Prof. Graham Clark's 1950s excavation, it was suggested there was a manmade platform on the lake shore, presumably to stabilise the edge of what would have been a muddy, seasonally fluctuating area.

At the time of their recovery in the 1950s, well preserved organic remains such as these were extremely rare and Star Carr became a world famous site which effectively brought about recognition of the Mesolithic era and created the discipline of Mesolithic studies in the UK.



These early discoveries at Star Carr have unique elements, such as the antler frontlets and aspects assigned to ritual interpretation. The most recent phase of investigations by the Vale of Pickering Research Trust and a joint Universities of York and Manchester research team, suggests relatively sedentary hunting communities living along the lake edge. The observation of the degradation of the waterlogged deposits at Star Carr has led to the development of a rescue strategy to complete excavation and the retrieval of all surviving waterlogged evidence.

Archaeological excavation by the LRC at Cook's Quarry, West Heslerton gives an insight into the complex landscape suggested throughout the survey area. The excavated evidence demonstrates a complexity of human activity with use and re-use occurring throughout. In the case of Cook's Quarry, a stream channel became a focus for late Mesolithic activity, and subsequent continuous activity. Recent excavation undertaken by Northern Archaeological Associates (NAA) on the A165 to the South of Scarborough suggests many parallels to the West Heslerton data, with similar evidence of monument use and repeated re-use. Here we can see how long-term research is vital for interpreting and contextualising the results of commercial archaeology undertaken in advance of development.

Undertaken at a time of rapid technological change, the excavation and subsequent post excavation analysis developed by the LRC have transformed approaches to archaeological fieldwork and recording, particularly the use of digital recording technologies, and individual recording of whole assemblages. The articulation of these datasets has enabled new questions to be asked and answered. The impact of these excavations on teaching and training of the archaeological profession has been documented, with West Heslerton identified as one of the 20<sup>th</sup> century's 'great excavations'.

The quality of built heritage within the Vale of Pickering, including estate, church and vernacular buildings, is significant. The local geology is reflected in the building stone, with locally specific stone such as Hildenley Limestone used in masonry structures surviving from the early medieval period, such as St Mary's Priory Church in Old Malton. As such the character of the churches, towns, villages and farms is very distinctive and is associated with the very local nature of building stone and quarries.



The village plans on the northern side (from Ayton through to Helmsley) such as Allerston and Ebberston are sited on the northern spring line and retain their visual integrity and 'readability'. Similarly on the south-western side (from Malton to Helmsley) villages preserve remarkable integrity influenced by topography and later village development, for example Slingsby is orientated north-south, retaining a church and castle. Others in the valley bottom, such as Kirby Misperton, follow variations in topography associated with the former lake edges. These topographic features are noted in the place names of the Vale of Pickering, for example *ing* (means a moist pasture or meadow-land), *-carr* (is a marshy-tract at the foot of hills), and *mar* (mere/low lying waterlogged place). Other place names reflect the historical development of settlement within the Vale of Pickering, for example Appleton-le-Street and Barton-le-Street are both situated along the old Roman Road.

The built environment is characterised by stone-built and pan-tiled roofs. The eastern and southern villages are primarily chalk and brick built, in many cases the brick replacing earlier chalk buildings. Similarly, the sequences of development of a number of towns and villages in the Vale of Pickering have local and national significance. The characteristics of the built environment in Malton are very different to the rest of the Vale of Pickering, as the landowning family had access to building materials from across their estate. Stone was transported via the navigable sections of the river Derwent, and by rail following the opening up of the railway line in 1848.

Archaeological evidence from these more recent periods is extant throughout the Vale of Pickering. The network of over 400km of public rights of way are a significant part of the heritage of the Vale of Pickering. These networks demonstrate access to the land through time, with many having historic forbears, and away from the intensively farmed areas in the centre of the Vale there are a number of sunken lanes. Remnants of the pre-Beeching railway exist, surviving particularly well at Hutton Buscel and between Kirkbymoorside and Pickering. The Victorian railway stations are a distinctive part of the built heritage of the Vale of Pickering, and show how villages and towns were connected in the pre-Beeching era. Other distinctive elements of local interest include bridges, telephone boxes, village halls and former post offices. Less obvious is the legacy of 20<sup>th</sup> century defences and airfields.





The high number of early churches is significant, those with 6<sup>th</sup> or 7<sup>th</sup> century origins possibly being related to the kingdom of Deira. These are particular significance in understanding the relationship early churches may have had with the earlier landscape and material culture features. Perhaps further evidence would have come to light had more parish churches undergone restoration work in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Statutory protection reflects the significance of the many medieval parish churches, (such as All Saints' church in Pickering with its 15<sup>th</sup> century wall paintings), which are situated alongside later 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century buildings, such as St Andrews Church, East Heselton. The presence of architecturally important churches is a significant characteristic throughout the Vale of Pickering. Given the nature of the archaeological evidence, in most cases the surviving parish church is the most obvious 'sign' of a more complex past.

The place-names of the Vale of Pickering testify to its physical condition –*ing* (moist pasture or meadow-land), *-carr* (marshy-tract at the foot of hills), *mar* (mere/low lying waterlogged place), and *marishes* are common throughout.

In 1930 the archaeologist Frank Elgee noted:

“These names... speak with no uncertain voice as to the condition of the Vale a thousand years ago... The names have survived; but man, with great labour, has mastered the swamp... from its encircling heights we behold a Vale free of swamp and characterised from end to end by fertile fields.” (Elgee, 1930, p. 4).

Allerston  
Amotherby  
Appleton-le-Street  
Barton-le-Street  
Beadlam  
Brawby  
Brompton-by-Sawdon  
Broughton  
Butterwick  
Cawton  
Cayton  
Crossgates  
East Ayton  
East Heslerton  
East Knapton  
East Ness  
East Newton  
Eastfield  
Ebberston  
Filey  
Flixton  
Flotmanby  
Folkton  
Fryton  
Ganton  
Great Barugh  
Great Edstone  
Great Habton  
Gristhorpe  
Harome

Helmsley  
High Marishes  
Hovingham  
Hunmanby  
Hutton Buscel  
Irton  
Kirby Mills  
Kirby Misperton  
Kirkbymoorside  
Lebberston  
Leysthorpe  
Little Barugh  
Little Habton  
Low Marishes  
Malton  
Marton  
Marton  
Muscoates  
Muston  
Nawton  
Normanby  
Norton  
Nunnington  
Oswaldkirk  
Pickering  
Potter Brompton  
Reighton  
Rillington  
Ruston  
Ryton

Ryton  
Scagglethorpe  
Scampston  
Scarborough  
Seamer  
Sherburn  
Sinnington  
Slingsby  
Snainton  
Speeton  
Sproxton  
Staxton  
Stonegrave  
Swinton  
Thornton-le-Dale  
Thorpe Bassett  
Welburn  
West Ayton  
West Heslerton  
West Knapton  
West Ness  
West Newton  
Willerby  
Wilton  
Wintringham  
Wombleton  
Wrelton  
Wykeham  
Yedingham

## Historical Value



There is a long history of antiquarian interest in and around the Vale of Pickering. In the 1750s a Roman Bath House was excavated at Hovingham, and over the last 200 years excavations have been undertaken by William Greenwell, J R Mortimer, J C Atkinson, James Ruddock of Pickering, Thomas Kendall of Pickering, Lord Lonsborough, Jabez Allies, Rev. Fred Porter, Dr J Kirk, Philip Corder, Rev. David Smith, F. Gerald Simpson and others. Raymond Hayes and Terry Manby worked extensively in the latter half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. This has resulted in collections of material in Scarborough Museum, York Museum, Hull Museum, Malton Museum and Beck Isle Museum alongside national collections at the British Museum, in addition to private collectors such as the Grantham collection and Cundall collection. However, the legacy of work on the more visible archaeological evidence extant on the North York Moors and Yorkshire Wolds meant that up until the 1970s the Vale of Pickering was largely considered to be an archaeological 'blank' with the exception of spot finds and occasional archaeological sites.

The 40 years of research since the 1970s has revealed a remarkable and complete sequence of human activity in the Vale of Pickering that starts in the late Palaeolithic. We know that from at least c. 9,000BC humans were modifying the natural environment to improve the quality of their own lives. Every single period from the late Palaeolithic to the present day is represented somewhere within the Vale. The sands and gravels found throughout the valley have provided a perfect situation for prehistoric and later settlement. These 'light' locations have provided a perfect resource for prehistoric and later settlement situated close to economically and environmentally advantageous landscapes in the centre and with access to upland grazing landscapes both to the north and the south. Chronological summaries are provided in the separate text boxes.

The impact of recent 'theme-based' work in challenging misconceptions of period-based chronologies has been well established. It has transformed our understanding of human use of landscapes in the past. The cumulative impacts of a 'theme' approach suggest we have hopelessly underestimated past population in most lowland river valleys in the UK, and by dispelling period-based 'gaps' in archaeological knowledge it has been possible to

show a complete sequence of human activity since the late Palaeolithic. Prof. Richard Morris states: “The picture and detail that have crystallised in result is unparalleled in Britain. The ‘grammar’ of the landscape has been exposed. It includes cemeteries, field systems, boundaries, routeways and settlements.”



The Vale of Pickering from the air.



Hovingham (June 2011).



Hovingham (July 2011).



East Heslerton (July 2011).



Rillington (June 2011).



Barton le Street (July 2011).



Slingsby (July 2011).



East Heslerton Carr (June 2010).



Sherburn (June 2011).

The Vale of Pickering from the air.



East Heselton Carr (June 2010).



Barton-le-Street (June 2011).

### **History of Science.**

The Vale of Pickering is a significant location in the history of science, and the creation and definition of a number of disciplines, with significance crossing over from early discoveries in the 19<sup>th</sup> century to current practice.

William Smith lived for the later part of his life as land agent for Lord Derwent at Hackness Hall (outside the Vale of Pickering but on the edge of the Moors where the Derwent rises). His 1815 Geological Map of Britain, and his observation of the geological sequence of the UK underpins our scientific understanding of the world and how its geology dictates the landscape in which we live. His collection forms the heart of the Rotunda Museum in Scarborough, and historically his geological specimens are associated with the precursor to the current Malton Museum. Recent projects undertaken by the LRC have allowed this data to be made accessible via Google Earth - like Smith's geological map the printed 'wallpaper' and onscreen map of excavated, aerial photographic and remote sensing features identified and plotted by the LRC have revolutionised our understanding of the scale and complexity of human use of past landscapes.

In 1822 William Buckland's analysis and observation of the fossil remains discovered in the Kirkdale Cave, and his conclusion in *Reliquiae Diluvianae*, that these were fossil animals living in Britain in ancient times rather than as a result of Biblical Flood was revolutionary. The 'big firsts' of science continue in the context of the Vale of Pickering at a site and period-based scale in the 20<sup>th</sup> century with the discovery and excavation in the 1950s by Graham Clark of Star Carr. This 'key site' has had a significant impact on Mesolithic studies in the UK. Moreover the continued work at Star Carr, Seamer Carr and Flixton Carr has defined the discipline of Mesolithic studies; this has been a significant focus for an earlier and current generation of Mesolithic researchers pioneering approaches to understanding our earliest post-Holocene relationship with the world around us.

Sir George Cayley developed the world's first manned aeroplane at Brompton in the 1800s, successfully flying over Brompton Dale in 1853. The annual Royal Aeronautical Society lecture is 'The Cayley Lecture'. The significant scientific and engineering discoveries undertaken within the Vale of Pickering are important as they provide the context within which disciplines have developed enabling our understanding of human use of landscapes through time.

Percy Kendall developed approaches to the study of glacial lakes and landforms in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. His work remains a significant contribution to understanding glacial and postglacial land change. His work popularised the idea of Pickering Lake.



## **Geology**

The underlying geology of the Vale of Pickering was formed in the Jurassic (c. 195-140 million years ago), forming the Howardian/Hambleton hills to the south-west, west and northern edges of the Vale. Overlying these Corallian geologies are the marine mudstones and thin limestones of the Kimmeridge Clay, which underlies the Vale of Pickering. The Cretaceous (142-65 million years ago) is represented by the Lower Cretaceous Speeton Clay which occurs along the north-eastern edge of the Wolds, and is exposed on the coast at Speeton. Overlying the Speeton Clay is the Red Chalk. The Southern edge is bounded by the younger Chalks of the Yorkshire Wolds formed in the Upper Cretaceous. Given the geological sequence of the Vale of Pickering it is widely perceived as the place at which northern England meets southern England.

The Pleistocene period lasted some 2.5 million years, with ice advancing and retreating across Britain many times. The middle of the valley is formed of the much more recent Quaternary lacustrine deposits of sands and gravels. These are associated with Lake Pickering which formed when the Scandinavian ice sheet blocked drainage of both the western and eastern ends. The late quaternary geology of the whole Vale is significant in understanding the story of glaciation and deglaciation.

The lake eventually over-spilled cutting the gorge through Kirkham. As such the course of the River Derwent was naturally and permanently diverted to flow south to the Ouse basin – seemingly to flow ‘backwards’ from the sea.

The Jurassic stones (Malton Oolite and Coral Rags) are a distinctive stone filled with ammonites, gastropods and bivalve fossils.

## **Palaeolithic**

The palaeoenvironmental evidence of late Pleistocene and early Holocene suggests that as the climate improved at the eastern end of the Valley Lake Flixton was formed. Survey work suggests that a characteristic band of *phragmites* peat at the 23m contour marks the beginning of the Holocene. Late Paleolithic flint assemblages from Star Carr suggest a human presence in the landscape. The interplay with the environmental sequence from Wykeham and the human sequence excavated at Star Carr and Seamer Carr allows understanding of the human impacts of changing climate.

## **Mesolithic**

From about c. 8,500 BC the climate improved with grasses and sedges occupying the wetland edges, and birches, willow, hazel and pine progressively colonising the drier soils. As the climate continued to improve from c. 7,500BC to 6,300BC deciduous woodland with elm and oak began to appear. At the eastern end of the Vale work by the Vale of Pickering Research Trust on excavated sites at Star Carr, Seamer Carr and Flixton Carr, alongside sub-surface modelling, has revealed evidence at the edge of Lake Flixton, with a concentration of finds at the 25m contour which is considered marginal to the lake.

A combination of radio-carbon dating and pollen analysis suggests that, as temperatures rose at the end of the last glaciations, the lake gradually filled in from the edges with reed swamp, followed by *carr* woodland, but that a later rise in lake levels caused a return to reed swamp. The exact shape and extent of Lake Flixton is unknown, and recent survey work by NAA in advance of the East Coast Pipeline and by Barry Taylor (University of Manchester) is beginning to enhance our understanding.

Star Carr is significant on account of the remarkable organic preservation within waterlogged peat deposits. During Prof. Graham Clark's 1950's excavation it was suggested that there was a platform on the edge of the lake. The most recent phase of investigations by a joint Universities of York and Manchester project suggests relatively sedentary hunting communities living along the lake edge. This recent work at Star Carr suggests that the perception of 'home' territory is likely to be much earlier than previously thought c. 9,000BC. Research by the Vale of Pickering Research Trust in the 1990s would suggest that there are plenty of other contemporary sites around Lake Flixton and lakelets in other locations across the Vale of Pickering which are likely to provide evidence from the period c. 9,000-8,500 BC. Mesolithic evidence is not restricted to the eastern end of the Vale of Pickering, with Mesolithic flints reported further to the west at Great Habton and Wath Quarry.

It is important to place the activity in the Vale of Pickering in a regional context as extensive activity is recorded throughout the North York Moors in the Mesolithic and Late Mesolithic. This is revealed in the Moors through field walking - an environment in which lithic scatters are readily identifiable, unlike the Wolds and Vale of Pickering in which intensive farming limits the visibility of such material.

On the basis of comparative data from elsewhere in the country (but without dating) it would seem monumentality emerges in the late Mesolithic in the form of post avenues. Substantial evidence survives of human modification of the natural environment through the felling of trees, creation of crossing places or platforms over streams and lake margins, cleared scrub and burnt reeds, and erection of temporary or semi-permanent dwellings. Activity seems focused on the wetland, with post alignments running north-south into the wetlands rather than laterally to the landscape. By the late Mesolithic evidence from elsewhere in the Vale of Pickering, such as West Heslerton, suggests that stream channels are used as routeways and also as sources of flint. At this point the underlying structure of the settled landscape was beginning to be defined.

### **Neolithic**

By the Neolithic there are clear indications of dominant human interventions in the landscape in terms of making and demarcating land. For example long barrows appear earlier than c. 3,500BC on the Wolds and Moors, on the 'edges' of the Vale of Pickering, and also within the centre of the valley at sites such as Roundhills (Yedingham), and Rillington. Hengiform monuments (small henge monuments) are relatively regularly spaced on the same contour between Malton and Seamer and between Malton and Hovingham: these are associated with Grooved ware.

By c. 3,000BC there is the appearance of round barrows, cursus monuments, and mortuary enclosures. These have been found in the LRC survey area (primarily on the sands, gravels and chalks on the southern side of the Vale). Within this area it is possible to observe some aspects of chronology in the earthworks. Aerial photography on the north side of the Derwent demonstrates an increase in crop mark returns in recent years, possibly associated with agricultural damage. It is important to note that much of the Neolithic and Bronze Age domestic activity is absent from the geophysical returns as these sorts of features do not respond well to geophysical survey.

During the Neolithic and Early Bronze Age there is evidence of islands within the peat fen which are used for settlement and burial, with track ways crossing the valley. At this point the underlying nature of the settled landscape is already structured and defined, with major boundaries dividing the land into large blocks bounded by pit-alignments, trackways and cemeteries. Given the growing picture of activity from elsewhere in the UK it seems likely these were based upon earlier Neolithic or Mesolithic transhumance patterns establishing connections between wet, slope and higher land.

## **Bronze Age**

By the beginning of the Bronze Age extensive cemeteries are established between the 30m and 40m contours on the southern side of the river Derwent (as with the earlier Neolithic features, fragments of aerial photography suggest similar such features exist on north side of the Derwent and between Malton and Hovingham). These barrow cemeteries have a much higher density than those on the Wolds, reflecting the higher density of domestic occupation and with continuity over 1,000 years.

A Beaker settlement has been excavated at Cook's Quarry in West Heslerton, which included round-houses and domestic pits with extensive finds such as quern stones, hone stones, pottery, and flint tools. In the 2000s the only known Beaker kiln in the world was excavated in advance of quarrying. These features could only be identified through excavation, as they are invisible in aerial photographs and geophysics. This indicates that the LRC survey data may not show the 'only' archaeology in the area, for example at Cooks Quarry only 2 of the eventual 6 barrows were identified prior to stripping.

By the middle Bronze Age cemeteries and settlements are located on islands in the valley bottom surrounded by peat. By the Late Bronze Age, Staple Howe (Brewster 1963) and Devils Hill palisaded enclosures are established. These are probable refuges – and forerunners of later Iron Age hill forts, with many other such structures likely within the Vale of Pickering, beneath later medieval castles – as is evidenced at Scarborough. These are contemporary with extensive areas of open settlement on the sands and gravels on the edge of the former wetlands as, for example, at West Heslerton. Here excavation has revealed areas of settlement with an associated cemetery lying adjacent to a major prehistoric road and ditches reflecting the creation of field systems.

At this time the importance of the Vale of Pickering, and its discoveries, cannot be separated from its neighbouring landscapes. The North York Moors was a successful arable landscape up until the middle Bronze Age c.1,200BC. After that time the arable potential was severely depleted as a consequence of climate change though it still has a significant role as grazing landscape. The Wolds with its chalky and well drained soils seems to have survived this climatic event with less impact on the landscape and its population.

### **Iron Age**

By the middle of the Iron Age, square barrow cemeteries with thousands of burials are in evidence in the middle of the Vale and on its northern and southern slopes. The presence of such large cemeteries suggests a very large population.

This population was living in round houses and ladder settlements began to become a feature of the landscape. These are nucleated cores, with enclosures attached to either side of a central track way, and are linked with subsequent development further along the track ways. This 'linear city' is a characteristic feature of the Vale of Pickering between 500 BC and 500 AD. Extensive evidence of ladder settlement occurs within the LRC survey area, whilst aerial photography indicates a similar density of ladder settlement features between Malton and Hovingham, and on the northern side of the Vale of Pickering on the opposite side of the River Derwent to the LRC study area.

Research by the LRC suggests that in the 1000 years of its use the occupation within the ladder settlement oscillated, with enclosures used for stock and then burnt and used for settlement, and then reused again for stock several hundred years later. The LRC has excavated sections of the ladder settlement in Sherburn and this suggests that over the c. 1000 years of its existence the ladder settlement is highly resistant to change and/or movement. It is, however, influenced by climate change in the late Roman period, as shown by flood defences and evidence of standing water in the ditches – suggested by frog bones. The fact there is no movement is possibly because the entire landscape was 'used', and this perhaps links back to that earlier Mesolithic notion of 'home' and home land.

Other Iron Age sites such as the Costa Beck near Pickering (Hayes 1988) suggest a complex use of the land as a whole and ritual aspects of life throughout the Vale of Pickering with the interplay between land/living and water. These ritual aspects of landscape continue through subsequent periods.

## Roman

The archaeological evidence from the Vale of Pickering in the Roman period can be characterised by both change (with the military fort and town in Malton, and occasional high-status villas) and continuity (of economy and pre-Roman settlement patterns).

Throughout the Roman period the thriving ladder settlement remains, and this demonstrates little change between the earlier Iron Age and Roman periods. The continuity in domestic or agricultural use of the landscape as demonstrated by the ladder settlement is significant. It is assumed the practice of transhumance farming generated a surplus which was traded for a greater quantity of material goods. Excavations in Sherburn demonstrate a rise in material goods in the Roman period, with the presence of typical Roman ceramics (Samian and Crambeck wares) amongst others, but the fundamental basis of the economy remains the same - sheep, goat, cattle and metal working. By c. 500AD the ladder settlement is eventually abandoned due to ingress of water, but occupation continues in new settlement zones.

Although sites such as Beadlam Roman villa exist, across the Vale of Pickering substantial Roman villas are relatively uncommon. This is perhaps due to a relationship with the local economy of cooperation rather than intense Romanisation. Some of the apparent absence of villa sites may be an underestimation as they may not have not been recognised. The Roman structure excavated in the 18<sup>th</sup> century at Hovingham seems an exceptional site, with excavated features that are uncommon other than in the most high-status of structures.

Roman military remains are a significant feature, with the Roman fort in Malton associated with a large *vicus* or 'small town' occupying the Malton and Norton banks of the Derwent. This site is now associated with *Delgovicia* rather than the traditional identification of *Derventio*. The impact of this Roman activity on the rest of the Vale of Pickering has to be considered in light of the apparent longevity of the ladder settlement. Norton also has a late Post-Roman cemetery. Commercial development-led archaeology confirms the density of activity throughout the Vale, with commercial archaeological units such as MAP encountering Roman material in Malton and Norton, in Hovingham, Wykeham and at Seamer.

Patterns of landscape significance continue through time with an excavated complex at West Heselton, which is articulated in its final form as a Roman shrine, associated with both a well and spring. Though the earliest phases were unexcavated the assumption is that there was an earlier prehistoric use. An increasing number of Roman ritual sites within the Vale of Pickering seems to confirm that the Vale was sacred from early prehistory, perhaps on account on the 'backward' flowing river Derwent.

### **Anglo-Saxon**

Within the LRC study area there is no evidence for a break in continuity of population. The Vale of Pickering has a high concentration of Anglo-Saxon settlement activity (though increasingly this seems comparable to the evidence collected through aerial photography for the Yorkshire Wolds), with settlement every 800m and large villages of c. 20ha every c. 2,500m, for example at East Heselton, West Heselton and Sherburn. Other activity across the Vale discovered in development contexts, such as the Anglo-Saxon site at Wykeham, fit within this overall context of continuity and density. Given this complexity it is likely there is an Anglo-Saxon precursor to every village in the Vale of Pickering, with major Anglo-Saxon villages the forerunners of medieval settlement. Those settlements with early churches, such as Rillington and Sherburn do not move and settlement remains to the current day.

In the 9<sup>th</sup> century there is a major re-structuring of the landscape with rig and furrow established. This is concurrent with the movement of villages of West Heselton and East Heselton into more protected areas on the sides of the Valley. This movement may be associated with the Viking period - an Anglo-Saxon response to the Vikings or a Viking response to the landscape.

From the 8<sup>th</sup> century the Vale of Pickering is associated with the people of Deira, and may have formed its heartland, as the Vale has the highest density of early churches in the UK. There are a remarkable number of 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> century religious communities found on the borders and approaches of the Vale of Pickering (at Lastingham, Gilling, Stonegrave, and Coxwold). Within the Vale the survival of architectural or sculptural elements such as Anglo-Saxon carved stone and/or the reuse of Roman material (sarcophagi etc) and archaeology attest to the significance of sites such as Kirby Misperton, Sherburn, Hovingham and Kirkdale. These may all be associated with prayer houses or burial by Deira's ruling elite. If the Vale of Pickering is the heartland of Deira it may account for anomalies in the faunal record at West Heselton, where the lack of market age cattle in a huge animal bone assemblage may result from their being used in the payment of tithes or taxes.

Bede describes monasteries situated in the wetland. This description chimes well with the probable situation in the Vale of Pickering in this period, with evidence suggesting a significant causeway linking Pickering to Kirby Misperton, and another similar causeway at Sherburn. This would again suggest that a number of these places in the Vale were occupying positions within the earlier sacred landscape. The sense of place and ritual associations of water within the enclosed valley, which were established as early as the Mesolithic, continue: the parish churches established at this point continue in use (albeit much modified) today.

## Medieval

From the end of the 10<sup>th</sup> century the significance of the Vale of Pickering has an increasing physicality with greater survival of upstanding structures, such as castles, churches and monastic buildings. Where these survive they have had a long-term influence on the landscape. If we can interpret longevity of landscape influence within the archaeological record (as for example the position of Anglo-Saxon cemeteries on earlier prehistoric barrows at West Heslerton) we can understand how these surviving physical features from earlier times influence landscape use up until the 18<sup>th</sup> century, and in some instances through to today.

From the 10<sup>th</sup> century, documentary sources outline the significance of the Vale of Pickering. Domesday records show a complex and wealthy economy, characterised by increasing nucleation in the same locations as today's villages and towns. Settlement continues in the sequence of the modern villages and towns of the Vale of Pickering, with the medieval archaeology of the towns of Malton, Norton, Pickering, Scarborough and Helmsley significant. Towns such as Malton retain an almost entire medieval plan.

After the Norman Conquest established patterns of landscape use by-and-large continued – but at this time a number of castle-building projects were commenced. The later stone-built castles at Ayton, Pickering and Helmsley occupy a prominent position on the northern side of the Vale of Pickering. Most were built by barons with the exception of Scarborough castle which was built by Henry II. Other earlier motte-and-bailey pre-cursors are extant through the Vale of Pickering, for example at Wilton, and we know other such structures in Malton were destroyed in later periods.

Perhaps the greatest intervention on the landscape are the parish churches, many using sites of significance from earlier periods, re-using or robbing stone from earlier buildings. In addition medieval monastic granges are found throughout the Vale of Pickering. Extant remains are incorporated into later farm buildings in Yedingham and Wykeham, and at Foulbridge the former Knights Templar Preceptory hall founded c. 1226 survives. St Mary's Priory Church in Malton is the only Gilbertine monastic structure surviving above ground in the UK.

The medieval strip field system survives in and around Pickering and Middleton, with the field map of Pickering preserved at the Beck Isle Museum. Rig-and-furrow field systems survive south of Pickering at Riseborough, and with some sparse extant evidence within the Vale bottom (in Yedingham for example). Geophysical survey in the LRC survey area indicates the presence of rig-and-furrow throughout the Vale, but it is ploughed out within the now flat arable fields.

As with earlier periods different zones of the landscape were being exploited, from wet, to dry to slope, and with the surrounding upland. Duchy records suggest the best hay preferred for the stud at Blansby Park in the 14<sup>th</sup> century came from the meadowland in the Marishes district (in particular Castle Ings at the confluence of the Derwent and Rye).

The landscape of villages and farms, whilst largely of post-medieval character, probably includes unrecognised evidence of medieval buildings surviving in complete or partial form. The survival of masonry structures built using earth mortars from the 12<sup>th</sup> to the mid 18<sup>th</sup> century represents an unrecognised tradition of earth building in both high-status, urban contexts (in Malton) and throughout the Vale of Pickering.



## **Post Medieval**

Saxton's Yorkshire map of 1577 records the main settlements and the meandering course of the River Derwent. John Ogilby's map of 1675 (the first such to depict roads) clearly demonstrates precursors to today's road network, with Malton linked to Pickering (and on to the Moors), and Malton linked through Rillington to Staxton, Seamer and on to Scarborough. This records crossings over the rivers and occasionally observes land use ('meadow ground' north of Howe Bridge, 'arable both sides' between Seamer and Falsgrave). Thomas Kitchen's map of 1764 clearly shows the precursors to the remaining road networks, circumnavigating the Vale of Pickering, with the significant crossings over the River Derwent at Yedingham.

Enclosure occurred in the Vale of Pickering at various dates from the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Enclosure consolidated strips in the open fields into more compact units and created the landscape which we see today. The characteristic patchwork of mixed arable, pasture and woodland in large enclosed fields is the result of agricultural improvement through both enclosure and land drainage.

Land drainage schemes of the agricultural improvers in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries were a result of rising population, food shortages, and repeated flood incidents within the Vale, alongside attempts of individual landowners to increase the value of their landholdings. The drainage system of interlinked cuts and ditches was suggested in 1800 by the engineer William Chapman with the support of Sir George Cayley. The plan was to straighten the course of the River Derwent, reducing the length from Yedingham to Ayton, to divert the headwaters from the Derwent above the Forge Valley into a new Sea Cut, and to create a two level system of drainage. This would isolate the water coming from the high ground and keep it separate from the lowland water through a series of embankments and tunnels. Whilst much of the Vale must have formed water meadows suitable for grazing, cereal production was the main motivation for the 1800 drainage act. These human-acts changed the human-nature-culture relationship with the landscape of the Vale of Pickering which was first established in the Mesolithic.

The estate houses, villages and designed parkland and landscape have precursors too, but take their current form from this period of agricultural improvement. The continuity of the estate families within estate villages is a significant characteristic of the Vale of Pickering, with historically imported designed parkland at Wykeham, Scampston and Hovingham. Historically significant buildings are found throughout the Vale of Pickering from this time, such as Ebberston Hall and Church, Garforth Hall Farm, and the Dovecote at Appleton-le-Street.

The population shift from countryside to town changed the nature and character of the Vale of Pickering, with the market towns of Malton, Norton and Pickering subject to substantial growth. Transport links within the Vale improved. Connections outside the Vale of Pickering also improved with the Navigation of the Derwent to Malton through a 1702 Act of Parliament), subsequently extended through to Yedingham in 1814.

### **1800s to today**

The railway was extended from York to Scarborough in 1845, and over subsequent years from Malton to Pickering, and to the eastern and western limits of the Vale of Pickering, with lost links to Driffild, Thirsk and elsewhere. With the opening of the railway in 1845 much of the freight was transferred from the Derwent navigation. The 1923 tile map of North Eastern Railway in the National Railway Museum in York shows the circumnavigating route of the various local railways prior to their demise in the 1950s.

Other impacts from the broader reach of estates are particularly apparent at the eastern end of the valley where the influence of the Sledmere estate extended, with East Heslerton Church forming a link with other later 19<sup>th</sup> century restored churches undertaken by GE Street for Sir Tatton Sykes II. Sherburn, notably was a rallying place for the Wolds Waggoners Special Reserve during the First World War. Other upland estates such as the Duchy and Middleton Estates take tracts from upland to the wetlands. This pattern is shared by many of the parishes.

The growing complexity of rural, semi-rural and town life changed relationships with the landscape. The social history of this time is well documented by John Rushton (2004) and Jack Binns (2003), who chart the important interplay between landscape and humans. Even at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century the diverse wetland landscapes were significant, with Pickering being home to the most northerly watercress beds (with their harvested products shipped via the railway).

At this time the Vale of Pickering becomes a landscape associated with leisure and sport. Hovingham is home to the oldest continuously played upon cricket pitch in private ownership in the UK. Ganton Golf Club is a European top 30 golf course – the natural sandy subsoil so conducive to archaeological research is similarly so for golf course construction, and it remains one of a handful of ‘inland links’. It was founded in 1891 and redesigned in 1911 by Herbert Fowler, and is an important early example of arts and crafts golf architecture. The estates were host to the various hunts, and Malton has a significant role in equine and horse racing history.

The Vale of Pickering has a significant archaeology of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, with a number of RAF and civilian airfields. A large number of sites were recorded through the defence of Britain project, perhaps most spectacularly at the coast at Reighton, and the Eden Camp museum is housed in a former Prisoner of War camp. The Vale of Pickering is also significant in the early development of zoos, with the forerunner to Flamingoland established in the late 1950s. These 20<sup>th</sup> century developments have had a significant physical and visual impact on the Vale of Pickering.

“Into this basin there converge seven rivers – the Rye, Riccal, Hodge Beck, Dove, Seven, Pickering Beck and Derwent, as well as several smaller streams, all rising in the moorlands to the north. But the drainage instead of flowing down the Vale to the sea at Filey, breaks as one large river, the Derwent, through the hills on the southern side of the Vale at the great Kirkham Abbey gorge, thence to meander many miles to the Humber at Long Drax. This curious perversion of normal river behaviour originated in the Ice Age when the Vale was the scene of a vast glacier-lake draining southwards along the present course of the Derwent.”

(Elgee, 1930, p. 4).

“The whole drainage of the country south of the Esk, except a strip a mile or two broad north of Scarborough, enter the Vale of Pickering, and instead of taking the simple and direct course to the sea at Filey, is all diverted, against the slope of the rocks and the grain of the country, and passes out into the Vale of York by the gorge at Kirkham Abbey.”

(Kendall, 1902, p. 499).

## Natural Value



The Vale of Pickering has significant biodiversity. It is home to a mix of aquatic and dryland species, some with national significance, such as the insects and invertebrates in the water-cress beds at Pickering.

The connections between the surrounding uplands and upper and lower river courses are significant in the life cycle of a number of species. For example some birds breed in uplands, whilst others may overwinter in estuaries. Migratory aquatic species such as the sea and river lamprey, are named on the European Habitats Directive. Measures to facilitate their migration, alongside recently introduced Eel Regulations, include the removal of barriers to their movement in the Upper Derwent, and their status in the Vale of Pickering is likely to increase over time. Mammal species such as water vole are in decline, whilst others such as otter are on the increase. Problematic introduced species such as the signal crayfish are also found in the River Derwent (from Settrington to Malton). Air pollution in the Vale of Pickering is much improved since the cessation of stubble burning; diffuse and point-source pollution of rivers have similarly improved.

Before 1800 boggy peat deposits were probably surviving, with anecdotal evidence of such at land in East Heslerton and Ganton. We know that peat in the carrs at the eastern end of the Vale of Pickering have shrunk by on average 0.5m since the 1970s. Ironically whilst the archaeology is invisible from the surface, the demonstration of its destruction is tangible, with an increasingly undulating landscape now visible crossing east to west from Staxton to Seamer and from Sherburn to Brompton. The increase in the number of agricultural drainage schemes has been significant in the destruction of peat. Peat is a significant store of water, carbon and environmental evidence of the use of past landscape. This destruction has been a primary driver for the current re-examination of the site of Star Carr within rescue conditions.

The hydrology and geomorphology on the eastern end of the Vale of Pickering suggested a suitable setting for wetland restoration. Here farmers have been able to make use of the ELS and HLS schemes working through the Cayton and Flixton Carrs Wetland Project to enable the restoration of wet grassland (floodplain grazing marsh). This type of habitat has been lost from many parts of the British countryside.



The 5 partnership was established between North Yorkshire County Council, Scarborough Borough Council, the Environment Agency, Natural England and the RSPB. This project has the long-term aim to create a mosaic of farmed wetland habitats with extensive areas of wet grasslands grazed by cattle, sheep and other livestock. In amongst these will be wet ditches, seasonal pools (created through local water table management, alongside interventions such as 'scrapes') and pockets of wet woodland and reedbed.



This drive to change land management approaches has a dual duty to heritage and ecology through HLS, for example through reversion and minimum tillage. Target wetland species include snipe, curlew, lapwing, and redshank (all breeding waders), alongside other wetland birds such as yellow wagtail and reed bunting. Target farmland species include corn bunting, grey partridge, and tree sparrow. Other species such as the marsh harrier are highlighted by the RSPB. In this context it is also significant that the Vale of Pickering is one of the only areas in lowland Britain where wetland restoration is possible without conflicting with the 1944 International Convention on Civil Aviation. Through the rest of the Vale of Pickering the RSPB also provides a farm advisory role.



Water defines the Vale of Pickering, with the significant river courses of the River Derwent, Hertford, Rye, Dove, Seven and Costa Beck, in addition to numerous lesser water courses, canalised water courses and drainage systems. These lesser systems cluster to the western and northern side of the Vale of Pickering, with the confluence at Rillington and Ryton. East of the Sherburn Cut the River Hertford becomes dominant and there is no longer the density of named cuts and becks. The River Derwent is significant and is widely seen as the best example of a classic river profile with upper, middle and lower reaches. It retains virtually all its wildlife species.



The ritual aspects of the cultural landscape suggest the Vale of Pickering was sacred from early prehistory, perhaps on account of the enclosed landscape, the 'backward' flowing river Derwent, or the interplay between wetland and dryland living. We know places such as Sherburn, Kirby Misperton and Hovingham play a prominent role as promontories or spurs within the former wetland in the valley bottom. This interplay between cultural and natural values is significant from



earliest times until today, with the most significant changes in the human/natural relationship with the landscape occurring since the river management and agricultural drainage works of the 1800s. These works rapidly increased in the 1970s.

Given the scale of industrialised agriculture, some of the Vale of Pickering has significantly degraded ecology. Flood risk management and the protection from risk and vulnerability are significant issues in the Vale of Pickering. The concentration of water courses from the North York Moors results in flood peaks at Sinnington, Pickering and Malton and can lead to flooding. As a result of the 1999/2000 floods in Malton and Norton, land drainage and flood alleviation priorities have diverged dramatically. The 'slow the flow' approach by the Forestry Commission (for Pickering and Sinnington) aims to counteract flood peaks through the management and containment of water up stream. This is a pioneering approach, linking flood alleviation to biodiversity.

Groundwater movement along the spring line within the Corralian limestone at Sinnington, Kirkbymoorside and Pickering can also cause flooding, and events such as the 2005 flash floods affected the western end of the Vale. In other instances protected species, such as badgers, cause tensions by damaging flood banks.

The Yorkshire Wildlife Trust (YWT) reserves are situated in the north and east of the Vale of Pickering and encompass a broad range of habitats and different life cycles of species. Their grazing cattle (used for management of their reserves) over-winter at Pickering Low Carr Farm. The YWT have also worked with the York Diocese to create 'Churchyards as places of Wildlife' to increase biodiversity throughout the Vale of Pickering.





River Derwent  
River Hertford  
River Rye  
Costa Beck  
Pickering Beck  
River Seven  
River Dove  
River Riccal  
Holbeck  
Marrs Beck  
Wath Beck  
Double Dikes  
Slingsby Carr Cut  
Red Bridge Sewer  
Settrington Beck  
Hodge Beck  
Twelve Foot Cut  
Pry End Drain  
Thornton Beck  
Friar Dike  
Cripple Beck  
Scampston Beck  
Difford Beck  
Ellis Beck  
Weldale Beck  
Brompton Beck  
Beedale Beck  
Sherburn Cut  
Ruston Beck

“When I went to school I learned that the Vale in which we lived had once been a lake, but long ago the sea had eaten through the hills in the east and so released the fresh waters, leaving a fertile plain. But such an idea would have seemed strange to my innocent mind... I seemed to live, therefore, in a basin wide and shallow like the milkpans in the dairy; but the even bed of it was checkered with pastures and cornfields, and the rims were the soft blues and purples of the moorlands”

(Read, 1933, *The Innocent Eye*).

## Aesthetic Value



The Vale of Pickering is a landscape of great integrity, with the shape and form of the Vale clearly visible from a number of locations, allowing you to understand how the landscape's topography evolved. The shape and form is a product of the geological sequence of development and from the 'edges' it is possible to look down and imagine the Vale of Pickering as a landscape of ice and lakes. From the valley bottom the enclosed nature of the Vale of Pickering is retained and it is easy to link the special shape and form to a sense of place.

Ironically, the consequence of the sequence of human activity within the Vale is less visible. The landscape archaeologist Francis Pryor notes: "Fields provide a framework for using the landscape. They should not be thought of as archaeological artefacts that come and go. It takes a huge amount of communal effort to grub up hedges or fill in ditches. That is why, when field systems are eventually altered, the social, historical and economic implications can be huge" (Pryor 2010, 219).

This observation is significant for the Vale of Pickering, as the physical quality of the Vale is characterised by the patchwork of fields. We know the majority of these field boundaries are a result of 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century enclosure and land drainage, and the current large fields are a result of agricultural changes from World War II and increased intensification of agriculture. The visible landscape is one created over the last 200 years, and to a great extent since mechanisation of agriculture in the latter half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Many retired agricultural workers can recall the ploughing out of extant field boundaries, the removal of hedges, or removal of surviving rig-and-furrow. Thus the visible aspect of the cultural landscape of the Vale of Pickering is one primarily created within living memory.

With the exception of the upstanding historic buildings, and occasional surviving rig-and-furrow, the vast majority of the archaeological significance leaves little visible trace in the landscape today. This demonstrates the complexity of understanding archaeological and historical significance which lacks any physical or visual character. Moreover, the understanding that so much of the significance of the Vale of Pickering lies unseen, and thus intangible, are concepts of growing resonance within academic disciplines, but are complex to 'make real' for the general public. This makes intellectual and physical



access complex, particularly as most of the archaeological significance is located on land owned by individual farmers and landowners, to which there is limited access. This situation is exacerbated by the very limited number of footpaths and rights of way throughout the Vale of Pickering. So, experiencing the physical aspects of heritage and natural significance *in situ* is both difficult and complex.

There is inconsistency between the perception and values associated with landscapes considered to be 'natural' and those more mundane 'working' landscapes such as the Vale of Pickering. Consequently the Vale of Pickering has been overlooked in favour of the perceived 'wilderness' of the North York Moors and the open rolling country of the Yorkshire Wolds and the Howardian Hills. These three landscape areas have (or in the case of the Wolds, proposals exist for) statutory protection as discrete landscape areas. As such, the aesthetic values of the Vale of Pickering have been overlooked by their neighbours.

Given the nature of development planned within the Local Development Frameworks applicable to the Vale of Pickering, the visual quality of landscape character is unlikely to be impacted by large-scale development within Ryedale, or by planned development to the south of Scarborough. Though this may bring change, it is also likely to bring opportunities for habitat creation and aspects of interpretation within development schemes. The greatest impact upon the visual quality of landscape character will most likely be a result of potential agricultural changes that would impact upon the current perception of aesthetic significance.

Recently the aesthetic appreciation of the Vale of Pickering has been reflected in the growing presence of the area within the Open Studios weekends. Artists such as Scarborough based Kane Cunningham seek inspiration from and with their surroundings. Others such as the printmaker Paul Musgrove seek inspiration from the 'traces' in the geophysical surveys undertaken by the LRC, whilst the abstract artist Carmen Mills takes an archaeological approach to her art inspired from Star Carr. Other work as part of the Wolds Way Sculpture Trail at Knapton makes reference to the landscape setting, archaeological and natural values of the Vale of Pickering. In this sense artistic expression is an important tangible product from the buried archaeology.

“...despite its water-logged state the Vale was not altogether unpeopled in past ages.”

(Elgee, 1930, p. 4).

“Early man first appeared over 9,000 years ago, living on rafts on the swamps of the Vale of Pickering and the coastal region, when a land mass stretched from across the North Sea to Denmark. Bronze Age Man, at first avoiding the high hills, found dry sites for habitation on the Wolds, and dwelt all along the ridge of corallian limestone of the Jurassic rocks, which still provide sunny sites for village, on the northern margin of the Vale of Pickering.”

(Shell Guide to Yorkshire – East and North Ridings, 1964, p. 580).

## Communal Value



The physical boundaries of the Vale of Pickering interact with old county boundaries to create a sense of belonging in each parish. Parishes often follow a transect from the wet valley bottom, to the slopes and through to the higher ground on both southern and northern sides of the Vale. This is perhaps an earlier cultural ‘memory’ within each parish of a time when the centre of the Vale was not drained and access to a full array of environments was essential.

Estate and farm boundaries sometimes follow the parish boundaries, with others making more significant transects often far beyond the confines of the Vale, such as the Middleton Estate at Birdsall, Hovingham Estate and Wykeham Estate. Other commentators have observed the way in which parish boundaries record the shape and form of the Vale of Pickering prior to the straightening of the water courses in the 1800’s (Carstairs 2007). Old divisions are recorded by antiquarian map-makers, with the Wapentake divisions for the Vale of Pickering including Ryedale, Pickering Lythe, Dickering, Buckrose, and Harthill. These replaced the earlier Anglo-Saxon hundreds.

The Vale of Pickering is home to strong regional identities; the River Derwent was the boundary of the North Riding and East Riding up until 1974. The historic subdivisions make study and understanding of the Vale as a whole complex, with antiquarian map makers drawing lines to the north and south of the Derwent for the separate Ridings. From 1996 a series of parish maps was inspired through the Derwent Parish Maps project, at East and West Ayton, Malton, Norton, Muston and Helmsley. These maps were supported by the Environment Agency with English Nature and developed from the work of the charity Common Ground.

Local archaeologists such as Tony Brewster, Tony Pacitto and Raymond Hayes continued to work throughout the 20th century. The embeddedness of such individuals within the local community is unique. For many, the archaeologist was the school teacher and thus school days were spent doing the 3 R’s ‘Reading, wRiting and aRchaeology’. Others record evidence of school trips out to see excavations, such as the Roman Fort in Malton and Star Carr, in the 1950s. This informal relationship between professionals and the community is a significant characteristic of some of the communities within the Vale of Pickering.



Without such local knowledge, chance discoveries would not have been made. When quarry workers found a skeleton at Cook's Quarry, West Heslerton in the 1970s they knew it was significant and responded appropriately. This informal, communal association with archaeology has been instrumental in allowing the study and understanding of human impacts within a defined landscape area. However, the situation in West Heslerton is unique and this sense of place and heritage is not necessarily so clear in other places within the Vale of Pickering.



This 'embeddedness' is variable across the Vale of Pickering, depending on the nature of the projects and the person, alongside outreach and public knowledge (primarily through popular books and other forms of dissemination, such as TV and newspapers). The LRC worked with Malton Museum for the '2000 days of digging' exhibition in 2003-2004. This exhibition summarised the full scope of the LRC's research on the sands and gravels in and around West Heslerton between 1978 and 2003. Its extended opening into 2004 was a marker of the popular appeal of the exhibition. Lectures by local archaeologists, including Dr Nicky Milner and Prof. Dominic Powlesland, are extremely popular.



In the 1970s Stephen Warburton of the Yorkshire Wildlife Trust and Ian Carstairs campaigned through the Conservation Society of the Yorkshire Derwent (CONSYDER) against the opening up and making navigable of the Derwent. By 1991 the case concerning the applicability of the Rights of Way and Highways Act to rivers established the definition of a river, as 'a river' in preference to a legal definition of a river as 'land covered with water.' For river bank owners the test case was of enormous significance. Increasing access to the Vale of Pickering to encourage its understanding is made complex by the very limited nature of access to both Public Rights of Way and to the water courses that are so important in understanding its cultural and natural significance.



LEADER funding has been made available to a number of rural communities. A number of projects have been completed thus far through Ryedale District Council including restoration of the milestones on the B1258 (crossing the Valley through Yedingham), and repair works to Allerston Beck. Community action is found throughout the different interests in the Vale of Pickering and the Yorkshire Wildlife Trust has c. 31,000 members throughout Yorkshire, and supporters groups on each reserve.



Local communities and rural businesses are significant within the Vale. The Vale of Pickering has a strong regional identity reflected in music, art and rural life, with a cycle of events marking agricultural and cultural calendars, such as the annual sequence of agricultural village and town shows. The Vale of Pickering has a rich folklore, for example in Slingsby, Nunnington and Pickering where folktales are important in asserting cultural identity. Other folklore and oral histories attest to the presence of the 'wet' with stories of sunken agricultural machinery and in another instance a railway engine.

Local knowledge of the landscape and people working in it is rich, with stories to be told about how and in what ways people manipulate and change their surroundings. The earliest evidence of this is in the Mesolithic but work by the Internal Drainage Boards, and programmes such as the Cayton and Flixton Carrs partnership, continue this process of manipulating the landscape today.

Local identity and character looms large throughout the Vale of Pickering, and this is demonstrated in the local website [Ryedale.co.uk](http://Ryedale.co.uk) maintained by David Wakeley. In 2007 Helmsley Castle featured in a music video for the local band 'One Night Only', whilst a more established music venue is a transportable shed 'door' (The Shed). The Worsley collection records rural life in early moving images, while other collections within the Yorkshire Film Archive record events in Malton and Pickering. The photographic archives of William and Raymond Hayes and Sydney Smith form a considerable part of the collections at Ryedale Folk Museum (Hutton-le-Hole on the North Yorkshire Moors) and Beck Isle Museum (Pickering). This is significant, as it demonstrates a strong sense of local and regional identity which is distinct from the Yorkshire Wolds, North York Moors and coast.

For many 'outside', the Vale of Pickering is associated with a day out, reflecting the modern day leisure obsessions of tourism at the coast, (Scarborough and Filey), industrial heritage (North York Moors Railway), nostalgic heritage (Eden Camp, Farming Flashback and Dickens Theme Centre) golf, fishing and late twentieth century fun fairs (Flamingoland and Pickering Showground). Other attractions include country homes and gardens (Nunnington Hall, Pickering Castle, Scampston), signed 'sites' (Orchard Fields in Malton and King Arthur's Seat), plants (Roger's Roses, Reighton Roses), open farms (Playdale, Cayton), local





produce (market gardens and farm shops), gardens (both traditional and contemporary, such as Piet Oudolf's perennial garden at Scampston), and country pursuits (shooting is important in the estate economies). The Vale of Pickering is also significant in equine history as the location of one of the UK's earliest racecourses, as well as being home to early racehorse breeders and trainers, including the Darley Arabian from which all modern racehorses were bred. Sir George Cayley, the 'Father of Aviation', lived at Brompton-by-Sawdon.



In many respects these communal values demonstrate the extraordinary diversity of local heritage, ranging from more 'authorised' interests in grand historic buildings through to more socially diverse aspects of heritage from more recent times. These reflect the extreme diversity and complexity within the different communities in the Vale of Pickering.



Quarries  
Windblown sand  
Speeton Clay  
Kimmeridge Clay  
Corrallian (Jurassic Limestones)  
Lias (Jurassic Clays)  
Peat  
Moraine  
Sand Quarry  
Gravel Pit  
Red ochre  
Marl

## At Risk Statement



There is an irony that, at the point in which the significance of the Vale of Pickering is beginning to be understood, the fragility of its cultural significance has increased. This is related to the land management impacts on both wet- and dry-land archaeologies, in the eastern end of the Vale of Pickering and within the dryland/sandyland archaeology in the LRC survey area between Rillington and Ganton. This is alongside a number of conceptual, time sensitive and other risk factors.

### Conceptual Risk Factors

Whilst the Vale of Pickering is a landscape of great integrity, it is also a place passed through and overlooked from earliest times in relation to the higher profile Coast, Moors and Wolds. This relatively low profile is reflected in the lack of landscape-scale designation and the sense that for some the Vale of Pickering is just 'the place in between'.

HER records for the Vale of Pickering demonstrate the complexity of managing landscape scale assets. HER records do record landscape scale data (such as historic landscape characterisation) alongside site specific data. For example, in the Heselton Parish which has been the focus of research, there are 266 HER entries from all periods, including protected military remains (East Heselton). This is compared with 8 Scheduled monuments (with all 8 representing the 19<sup>th</sup> century antiquarian interests in the Heselton Brow Barrow Group) and 12 listed sites (all grade II with the exception of St Andrews Church, East Heselton). It is difficult to understand the rationale behind designated and undesignated assets and this may be linked to their visibility, alongside the complexities of recording areas in comparison to site-specific assets.

A similar situation is apparent in the lack of statutory protection afforded for natural assets in the middle stretches of the River Derwent and its tributaries in the Vale of Pickering, in comparison with the concentration of SSSIs, Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) and Special Protection Areas for the coast, Upper Derwent and Lower Derwent areas. The lower Derwent is also a RAMSAR Site of international importance. The vast majority of water that flows into the lower Derwent passes through the Vale of Pickering. Despite the cultural and natural significance of the Vale of Pickering, it has been overlooked and remains a 'blank' in relation to statutory identification and protection.



The intangible nature and invisibility of the significant aspects of the Vale of Pickering have an impact on its profile and conservation. For example within the LRC survey area, although the 'structure' of the archaeological sequence is compelling and remarkable, the 'emptinesses' between the mapped geophysics anomalies are equally important for any understanding of how and in what ways the landscape worked in the past. They are not archeologically sterile. Moreover the map of archaeological anomalies is poorly understood and, despite the scale of the work to date, requires further excavation to contextualise and calibrate chronologically.

Although the Vale of Pickering is characterised by innovative approaches to the archaeological study of landscape, there are restrictive notions of site and chronology. For example the discovery of, and subsequent focus on, Star Carr means that other contemporary sites around Lake Flixton and lakelets in other locations across the Vale of Pickering have gone relatively unnoticed. Here the site-based focus has limited our understanding of the rest of the landscape.

Heritage crime is a significant risk factor through the Vale of Pickering and complicates attempts to increase the physicality of archaeological significance. For example, observation of excavation, or of the LRC landrover parked up whilst undertaking a survey, can increase the vulnerability of a site by 'suggesting' opportunities for illegal metal detecting and night hawking. This creates significant tension in planning for long-term sustainability allied with public access and interpretation. A number of church buildings are also at risk from theft of lead from roofs.

Unlike cultural significance, natural significance can be recreated and restored. Recently The Cayton and Flixton Carrs Wetland Project (in partnership with the RSPB) has, amongst other non-invasive interventions, installed 'scrapes' and water control structures for habitat restoration. The scrapes benefit target breeding species such as lapwing and snipe. As with rescue archaeological work through the rest of the Vale of Pickering, it is complicated to place discoveries made through watching briefs or limited excavation undertaken during the creation of 'scrapes' into a wider landscape context. These issues are compounded by the difficulties of undertaking archaeological work in areas of ecological significance.



This highlights the opportunity afforded in the Vale of Pickering for heritage research and natural assets to provide a positive contribution into planning and land-use management. A research agenda could usefully target areas of known and less known archaeological and ecological significance. Establishing a baseline of information (such as remote sensing data) on a field-by-field basis would be a significant and sustainable method of managing conflicts of priority.



### **Time sensitive risk factors**

Water, its presence, management and impacts (both long-term and in short-term flood contexts) represent risks for the natural and cultural assets of the Vale of Pickering. Agricultural drainage has led to the destruction of the wetland archaeology at the eastern end of the Vale of Pickering with the internationally significant archaeology at Star Carr damaged through shrinkage and acidification.



The connection between peat bogs and climate change is significant in the context of the Vale of Pickering – suggesting areas for current concern and action, whilst also demonstrating the human/natural connections within the landscape. There is evidence that the archaeology of the earliest Mesolithic occupation in the Vale of Pickering is being destroyed through shrinkage of peats at exactly the same time that we, as a human race, must act positively to respond to effects of climate and climate change. The Cayton and Flixton Carrs Wetland Project at the eastern end of the Vale of Pickering has demonstrated how land management can be better engineered for nature conservation. We must now develop approaches to land use management across the rest of the Vale of Pickering that can be engineered for both natural and cultural significances.



Agricultural use of the Vale is now the greatest risk factor in the sandy-lands between Ganton and Rillington on the southern side. The windblown sand both buries and protects the traces of past human activity, but this is at risk from the impacts of mechanised farming, slicing through the blown sand to impact on the deposits protected below as farm machinery becomes more powerful and efficient. Pig farming, which is well suited to the same stretch of free draining sandy land, can also have significant impacts on the survival of the belowground archaeology, as well as impacting soil erosion and quality.



The intensification of agricultural water management and changed cropping regimes has created an environment which yielded air photographic evidence of human use of the past landscape. It is now widely understood that air photographic returns are related to agricultural destruction, with the better crop mark returns occurring in the years subsequent to heavy ploughing. In recent years almost all of the interventions made by the LRC have demonstrated some degree of mechanical damage as a result of changing agricultural practice. As such, there is a set of extremely sensitive issues made more complicated by the very local nature of many of the negotiations between researchers, landowners, farmers and contractors.

### **Other risk factors**

Conservation practitioners and planners argue for the need to identify local stone sources and, where appropriate, seek to re-open historic quarries for the provision of stone appropriate for use in repair of historic buildings, and in the construction of a new locally distinctive architecture for the Vale of Pickering. In other instances building change and adaptation within development control is hindered by the lack of availability of appropriate building materials. The connections between quarries and their localities are a characteristic of the Vale of Pickering which should be reflected within planning for conservation and development.

Moreover, more research needs to be undertaken to understand the deterioration factors affecting building stones, particularly soft limestones and chalk. A better understanding of their material properties would enable more appropriate conservation and repair solutions. This is particularly relevant when the age of some of the built fabric (particularly churches) is considerable. In some instances these risk factors are increased by flood, flash flood and ground water.

Appropriate maintenance of vernacular and church building is important as many have been placed at risk through inappropriate repair, particularly the use of cement renders and mortars for repointing the soft limestones and chalks.

The Vale of Pickering has an extraordinary social-economic diversity, with communities having different perceptions of what is understood by and valued as 'heritage'. 'Heritage' can be perceived as ranging from the more traditional heritage of country houses, through to less traditional heritage of more recent times.



Other factors such as 2<sup>nd</sup> home ownership have a significant impact on jobs, livelihoods, affordability and capacity of rural communities, and the parish-based system of participation in governance. Wider socio-economic factors have an impact on the built environment through the redundancy of churches and complications of parish-based and local planning. Other changes to society have altered the role of memory and commemoration with a resulting impact in churchyards. As an important routeway the A64 corridor is subject to more intensive development.

The data, archives and artefacts that have resulted from research within the Vale of Pickering are disparate and need to be brought together (or at least their data audited) in order to better understand their nature and to plan for their future. Some data are difficult to amass, for example AP data are sometimes not available in the HER, as information gathered by individuals are unavailable to collect and map.

The Vale of Pickering has a number of high profile visitor sites, such as Eden Camp, Flamingoland and the North York Moors Railway, alongside attractions such as the English Heritage properties at Helmsley, Pickering and Scarborough, and local museums. The relatively low profile of the Vale of Pickering impacts on the success of these lesser sites. There is no dedicated location to provide access and interpretation to the significant heritage and natural assets of the Vale of Pickering. Recent activity by the Yorkshire Wildlife Trust investigated the potential to exploit a nature tourism triangle along the East Coast to encompass the rich wildlife resources of the coast with some of the inland interests.

Representation is an issue throughout the Vale of Pickering. Whilst national statutory bodies regularly consult on the quality and nature of development, other interested bodies and individuals can feel disenfranchised from decision-making. Local decision-making frameworks do exist (for example parish councils, drainage boards), and more needs to be done to highlight cultural and natural significance at a landscape scale.

Access to the Vale of Pickering is poor and there is no location that provides access or interpretation of the varied cultural and natural significance. In the intensively farmed areas in the centre of the valley there are few Public Rights of Way, and limited access to rivers. This means it is difficult to understand and experience the unique quality of the Vale of Pickering.

## **What Next?**

This is the first stage in developing a sustainable approach to the Vale of Pickering. English Heritage envisages a 2<sup>nd</sup> Action Plan stage for the Vale of Pickering, which builds upon this initial document. This will prioritise further research and development of an outreach, management, conservation and interpretive programme for the Vale of Pickering. This will seek multi-disciplinary working and coordination of current and future research efforts to ensure public benefit from monies already invested in the Vale of Pickering.

A number of other projects have been highlighted at stakeholder meetings. These include a narrative synthesis of the historic environment using North Yorkshire HER data, and a similar assessment of the natural environment. Such an approach would provide an additional context for this Statement of Significance but is beyond the remit of this summary synthesis.

In addition, wider consultation on the Vale of Pickering must include parishes, estates, landowners, farmers and other interested groups. For some time, heritage professionals have acknowledged the difficulties of consulting stakeholders before they have gained an understanding of the very cultural and natural heritage assets about which they are being consulted. This statement of significance provides a first summary of significance for the Vale of Pickering and it is a basis for future consultation.



## List of individuals and organisations consulted for the production of the document.

Chris Fern Archaeology (Chris Fern); Earth, Stone and Lime Company (Nigel Copsey); English Heritage (Jamie Marshall, Keith Emerick, Pete Wilson, Ian Smith, Neil Redfern); Environment Agency (Martin Fuller); Forestry Commission / Slow the Flow (Simon Marrington); Hanson (Georgina Watkins, Stewart Laws, Ben Ayres, John Peate); Landscape Research Centre (Dominic Powlesland, Christine Haughton, James Lyall); LEADER East Riding (David Bull); MAP Archaeological Consultants (Paula Ware, Mark Stephens); Natural England (Margaret Nieke, Jackie Roberts); Northern Archaeological Associates (Richard Fraser, Mary Fraser); NYCC (Malcolm Barnett, Gail Falkingham, Linda Smith, Graham Megson, Penny Noake, Philip Strand, Richard Walker); Royal Holloway, University of London (Simon Blockley); RSPB (Michelle Lindsay); Ryedale District Council (Jill Thompson, Jos Holmes, Clara Turlington, Emma Woodland, Yvette Turnbull); Scarborough Museums Trust (Shirley Collier, Karen Snowden); Scarborough Borough Council (Peter Harrap, Tim Burkinshaw, Chris Hall); Star Carr Excavations (Amy Gray Jones, Chantal Conneller, Barry Taylor, Nicky Milner); Vale of Pickering IDB (Phil Fisher, Stephen Edwards); York Diocese (Phil Thomas); Yorkshire Wildlife Trust (David Hargreaves).

## Directory of organisations with interests in the Vale of Pickering

### **Airfields of Britain Conservation Trust**

(Welburn, Wombledon, East Heslerton, West Ayton, Scarborough, Filey Sands, Dotteral (Reighton))  
PO Box 26319, Glasgow, G76 6AH  
<http://www.abct.org.uk/>

### **Beck Isle Museum**

Bridge Street, Pickering, North Yorkshire. YO18 8DU  
<http://beckislemuseumtrust.wordpress.com/>

### **Cayton and Flixton Carrs Wetland Project**

(Project Officer)  
Parks and Countryside Services, Scarborough Borough Council, Manor Road Nurseries, Manor Road, Scarborough, North Yorkshire YO12 7RY.  
<http://www.caytonflicttoncarrs.org.uk/>

### **The Diocese of York**

Diocesan House, Aviator Court, Clifton Moor, York, YO30 4WJ  
<http://www.dioceseofyork.org.uk/your-church/church-buildings/>

### **The Earth Stone & Lime Company**

Estate Office Stables, 90 Old Maltongate, Malton, North Yorkshire, YO17 7EG  
<http://www.nigelcopsey.com/>

### **East Riding Archaeological Society**

(Annual Publication of the The East Riding Archaeologist)  
<http://www.eras.org.uk/>

### **Eden Camp Modern History Theme Museum**

Malton, North Yorkshire, YO17 6RT  
<http://www.edencamp.co.uk/>

### **English Heritage**

(Scarborough Castle, Pickering Castle, Helmsley Castle, Beadlam villa)  
<http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/>

### **Environment Agency**

<http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk>

### **Fern archaeology (Chris Fern)**

Aumit House, Ampleforth, York, North Yorkshire YO62 4EX

### **Filey Museum**

8/10 Queen Street, Filey, North Yorkshire, YO14 9HB  
<http://www.fileymuseum.co.uk/>

### **Helmsley Archaeological and Historical Society**

(Biennial publication The Ryedale Historian)  
<http://www.helmsleyarchaeologicalandhistoricalsociety.org.uk/>

**The Landscape Research Centre**

The Old Bridge Barn, Yedingham, Malton, North Yorkshire, YO17 8SL  
<http://www.landscaperesearchcentre.org/>

**Long Distance Walkers Association (Lake Pickering Circuit)**

155 mile walk (36 circular day walks) commemorating Percy Kendall's 1902 paper describing Ice Age Lake Pickering  
[http://www.ldwa.org.uk/ldp/members/show\\_path.php?path\\_name=Lake+Pickering+Circuit](http://www.ldwa.org.uk/ldp/members/show_path.php?path_name=Lake+Pickering+Circuit)

**Malton Museum**

The Old Town Hall  
Market Place, Malton, North Yorkshire YO17 7LP

**Malton Buildings Group**

Estate Office Stables, 90 Old Maltongate, Malton, North Yorkshire, YO17 7EG  
<http://www.maltonbuildingsgroup.com/>

**MAP Archaeological Consultancy**

The Croft, East Street, Swinton, Malton, North Yorkshire, YO17 6SH  
<http://www.maparchltd.co.uk/>

**Muston & Yedingham Internal Drainage Board**

The Vale of Pickering IDBs, Cundalls, 15 Market Place, Malton, North Yorkshire, YO17 7LP  
[http://www.valeofpickeringidbs.org.uk/MustonYedingham\\_000.htm](http://www.valeofpickeringidbs.org.uk/MustonYedingham_000.htm)

**Natural England**

<http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/>

**Northern Archaeological Associates (NAA).**

Marwood House, Harmire Enterprise Park, Barnard Castle, Co. Durham, DL12 8BN  
<http://northernarchaeologicalassociates.co.uk/contact.htm>

**North & East Yorkshire Ecological Data Centre**

St William's College, 5 College Street, York, YO1 7JF  
<http://www.neyedc.org.uk/index.php>

**North East Yorkshire Geology Trust**

(Secrets in the landscape trail including Malton Vale Trail, Wykeham Trail)  
5 Station Workshops, Station Road, Robin Hood's Bay, YO22 4TG  
[www.neyorksgeologytrust.com](http://www.neyorksgeologytrust.com)

**North Yorkshire County Council**

(Historic Environment Team)  
County Hall, Northallerton, North Yorkshire, DL7 8AD  
<http://www.northyorks.gov.uk/archaeology>

**North Yorkshire Moors Railway**

12 Park Street, Pickering, North Yorkshire, YO18 7AJ  
<http://www.nymr.co.uk/>

**National Trust (Nunnington Hall)**

<http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk>

**RSPB**

<http://www.rspb.org.uk/>

**Ryedale Natural History Society**

<http://www.ryenats.org.uk/>

**Ryedale Folk Museum**

Hutton le Hole, York, YO62 6UA  
<http://www.ryedalefolkmuseum.co.uk/>

**Ryedale District Council**

(Forward Planning)  
Ryedale House, Malton, North Yorkshire, YO17 7HH  
<http://www.ryedale.gov.uk/>

**Ryedale Vernacular Building Materials Research Group**

(currently inactive)  
<https://sites.google.com/site/ryedalebuildings/>

**Scarborough Archaeological and Historical Society**

PO Box 378, Scarborough, YO12 4WS  
<http://www.scarborough-heritage.org/main/sahs.asp>

**Scarborough Borough Council**

(Forward Planning)  
Town Hall, St Nicholas Street, Scarborough, North Yorkshire, YO11 2HG  
<http://www.scarborough.gov.uk/>

**Scarborough Museums Trust**

(Rotunda Museum and Scarborough Collections)  
Woodend, The Crescent, Scarborough, YO11 2PW.  
<http://www.scarboroughmuseumstrust.co.uk/>

**Scarborough Field Naturalists' Society**

<http://www.scarboroughfieldnats.co.uk/sfns.html>

**Slow the Flow**

Forestry Commission, Outgang Road, Pickering, North Yorkshire, YO18 7EL  
<http://www.forestry.gov.uk/fr/INFD-7YML5R>

**Yorkshire Archaeological Society**

Claremont, 23 Clarendon Road, Leeds, LS2 9NZ  
<http://www.yas.org.uk/>

**Yorkshire Geological Society**

<http://www.yorksgeolsoc.org.uk/>

**Yorkshire Wildlife Trust**

1 St George's Place, York, YO24 1GN.  
<http://www.ywt.org.uk/>

**Vale of Pickering Research Trust**

<http://www.starcar.com/>

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## List of photographic images

Page 1: Looking South toward Wolds from Wilton.

Page 13: Telephone box, Barton-le-Street; View from Newsham Bridge; View south into Vale from Sherburn Brow; River Derwent at Yedingham.

Page 14: View of Filey from Hunmanby Gap; t-junction near Great Habton; Costa Beck at Westgate, Pickering; Vale of Pickering Railway Map (NRM, York and Pickering Station).

Page 15: Looking South toward Wolds from Wilton.

Page 17: Butterwick Bridge; River Derwent at Yedingham; Sand Land in West Heslerton; Barn near Brawby.

Page 18: Reighton Gap; River Seven near Normanby; Marishes Lane, Yedingham, Bridge at Yedingham.

Page 19 and 20: Mapping the Vale of Pickering.

Page 21: Costa Beck at Westgate, Pickering; River Derwent at Yedingham; near Middleton Carr (Riseborough); Hunmanby Gap; near Riseborough Hall.

Page 22: Marishes Lane, Yedingham; Wilton; Derwent Farm, Yedingham; Wykeham Quarry; Sand Land in West Heslerton.

Page 23: River Rye at Ryton; Wintringham Church; Wintringham Church (detail); Star Carr Field.

Page 24: Near Brawby; Pickering Church; Near Brawby; Pickering.

Page 25: Near Riseborough; Slingsby; Between Eberston and Allerston; Barton-le-Street Church.

Page 28: Near Thorpe Bassett; Church at Kirby Misperton; Derwent Farm, Yedingham.

Page 29: Near Sherburn; near Yedingham; Near Brawby; Near Kirbymisperton.

Page 30 and 31: The Vale of Pickering from the air.

Page 45: Near Riseborough; near Yedingham; near Sherburn.

Page 46: Near Yedingham; near Yedingham; Ryedale Folk Museum; near Sherburn.

Page 47: Near Yedingham; Ryedale Folk Museum; Folkton Carr; near Yedingham.

Page 48: Aerial Photograph showing course of the river Rye.

Page 51: Newbridge (Pickering); River Rye at Ryton; Pickering; West Heslerton Churchyard.

Page 52: Allerston Station; Sherburn community excavation; Ganton; near Sherburn; Sherburn Carr.

Page 54: Near Brawby; Yedingham; Pickering Castle.

Page 55: Kirby Misperton Hall (Flamingoland); Sherburn Carr; near Yedingham; Ganton.

Page 56: Near Yedingham; Flamingoland seen from Pickering Castle; near Yedingham; Sherburn Brow; Ganton war memorial.

Page 57: Pickering Castle; Enclosure Rites Sculpture (Knapton); Children from West Heslerton Primary School at Enclosure Rites sculpture; East Heslerton Church.

Page 59: near Sherburn; Ganton; Sherburn Brow.

Page 60: West Heslerton; near Yedingham; near Yedingham; Pickering Castle; Ganton.

Page 61: near Yedingham; Kirby Misperton hall (Flamingoland); Ganton; Ryton.

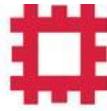
Page 62: Wintringham Church; Sherburn; Newsham Bridge.

Page 63: Wintringham Church; Wintringham Church; Hunmanby Gap; Peasholm Park, Scarborough.

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