Section 3

The Fringe of the Moors

SECTION 3 : THE FRINGE OF THE MOORS

Part 1 : Context

Introduction

Extending from Helmsley in the west, to Scarborough in the east, the Tabular Hills mark the southern boundary of the North York Moors National Park. So called because of their distinctive tabletop shape, these limestone and calcareous grit hills rise at a shallow angle from the flat agricultural plain of the Vale of Pickering and form a prominent north facing escarpment overlooking the central moorland. On top of the plateau of the dip slope is a gently rolling patchwork of arable fields and pastures, occasionally incised by steep wooded dales, which have been cut by streams flowing southwards from the moorland.

Much of the Tabular Hills falls within the National Park. However, the Park boundary steps northwards in three locations: between Ebberston and Thornton-le-Dale; between Pickering and Sinnington, and between Keldholme and Beadlam. Here, the Hills fall within the Ryedale District Local Plan area and form the 'Fringe of the Moors', the focus of this part of the study.

There are two key influences on this landscape. The first is the underlying geology that, together with glacial processes, has been responsible for creating the distinctive shape of the land. The second is the influence of man's activities, which has progressively shaped the agricultural landscapes, forest and settlements leaving a legacy of distinctive visual features. These are described more fully below.

Physical Influences

The solid rocks of the Tabular Hills are sedimentary, deposited in seas or deltas during the Jurassic period some 150-213 million years ago. Although there are many different types of sedimentary rocks in the area, they may be conveniently divided into two subdivisions, which are well-defined both geologically and topographically.

The oldest rocks are the Middle Oolite sequence of the Upper Jurassic, which form a succession of alternating layers of thick shales, calcareous gritstones and limestones. These were deposited in warm, generally shallow marine environments. The Kellaways rock at the base is succeeded by the Oxford clay, a poorly exposed sequence of shales found only on the lower slopes and bottom of the deeper vales, where they are frequently hidden beneath the alluvium of the valley floor. The overlying Corallian limestones were laid down as thick banks of shelly oolites, interbedded with calcareous grits, which are buff coloured fine-grained sandstones. Oolitic limestones comprise tiny rounded grains, about the size of a pinhead. Each grain or oolite has a nucleus, such as a small piece of sand grain or shell, around which lime has been deposited in successive layers. When all the grains become cemented together, the rock is said to be oolitic. Corallian rocks form the majority of the Tabular Hills but natural exposures can only be seen in a few locations such as on the lane side above Allerston and Ebberston, where the dip slope becomes quite steep and low cliffs are formed. The majority of exposures are, however, in the active and disused quarries that are scattered throughout the area. Some of these are now of international importance for stratigraphy, palaeontology and ecology.

The youngest rocks are the Kimmeridge clays of the Upper Jurassic. Comprising a thick series of very fossiliferous shales, these rocks were deposited in seas of increasing depth in contrast to the shallow marine environment of the Middle Jurassic rocks deposited below. The shales of the Kimmeridge clay form the low ground on the southern edge of the Tabular Hills where they are exposed in several clay pits near Kirkbymoorside.

Following a break in deposition at the end of the Jurassic era, seas in which the Cretaceous chalk was deposited covered the area. The chalk has since been completely eroded from the Tabular Hills, but still forms the Yorkshire Wolds to the south. In mid-Tertiary times, around 30 million years ago, the whole region, which had been under water for the previous several hundred million years, was uplifted to form land. The layers of rock were tilted only very gently, with resulting dips rarely more than 3°. The largest structure, the Cleveland dome dominates much of the higher land, now the moorland of the North York Moors. By contrast, the Tabular Hills are topographically less striking, dipping gently southwards, were they can be seen today in much the same horizontal attitude as that in which they were laid down. More important to the development of the Tabular Hills is the syncline (downward fold), at Pickering, which falls southwards and which later had a profound effect on the topography and drainage of the area, with the development of Newton Dale.

At about the same time as the folding, faulting in an approximate north south and east west direction fractured the region. Faults are relatively few throughout the Tabular Hills. The most important to this study is the Helmsley - Filey fault line which runs in an east west direction, east of Pickering, before disappearing and reappearing north of Helmsley. Although the vertical displacement along this fault line was low, it brought the weaker Kimmeridge clay deposits into sharp contact with more resistant Middle Jurassic rocks. Subsequent weathering resulted in the formation of a strong break in slope running parallel and to the north of the A170. As previously discussed it is this fault line which, east of Pickering, emphasises and approximates the boundary between the Fringe of the Moors and Vale of Pickering regional character areas.

Following the phase of folding during Tertiary times, a long period of steady but varied erosion by ice, sea, wind and rain ensued. Interrupted only by the ice ages, this erosion continued throughout the Quaternary, to produce something near the form of the landscape that we see today. Erosion of the weaker shales of the Oxford clay produced the strong escarpment that defines the northern boundary of the Tabular Hills. By contrast, on the southern edge of the hills, erosion stripped off the younger Cretaceous and Upper Jurassic rocks, to expose the south facing dip slope of the calcareous gritstones and limestones and to leave the Vale of Pickering floored by Kimmeridge clay (although for the most part masked by more recent glacial deposits).

About 2 million years ago, a change in climatic conditions led to the onset of the ice age, several phases of refrigeration, each of varying degrees of intensity, which interrupted the complex pattern of erosion and deposition in the area. The North York Moors and much of the Tabular Hills remained essentially ice-free, becoming instead an area of snowfields and tundra. However, ice sheets spreading from surrounding mountainous areas pushed up against the North York Moors from the east, the north and the west. The effect that the ice had on the area was dramatic and evidence for its existence still very clear.

As the ice sheets melted, they deposited their load of heterogeneous debris (known as 'drift') to form boulder clay or till which, together with their interbedded sand and gravel's, was deposited irregularly over the glaciated parts of the region. Because the ice sheets did not cover the high moors, it is along the fringes of the region, including the southern edge of the Tabular Hills, where the greatest concentrations of glacial deposits are found. Here they brought a fundamental change to the topography and character of the area. Where drift deposits predominate, the relief of the land is related to its thickness as well as to the configuration of the underlying solid rocks. This is seen particularly around Sinnington, where outcrops of underlying Jurassic deposits combine with boulder clay to form fingers of high land that extend from the Tabular Hills out into the Vale of Pickering.

The other main evidence of the ice are the meltwater channels or spillways that formed when glacial meltwater channels flowed into one another or coursed away from the ice front. These drainage channels, which were sometimes up to ten metres deep, were eroded into the rock by meltwater that flowed along the edge or below the ice sheet. Those ice edge waters draining off the ice sheet and into a glacial lake in the Esk Valley to the north, ultimately poured southwards through Newton Dale gorge, a pre glacial valley, which had breached the Jurassic escarpment. Newton Dale was considerably deepened by the spillway waters and now displays a sinuous course between cliffs often several hundreds of feet high. It is one of the most dramatic features of the Tabular Hills, its size and grandeur unlike any other. The ice waters drained into the Vale of Pickering, which at the time was an area of ice-dammed lakes and marshes.

The majority of the streams that drain the Tabular Hills today follow a pattern that was established long before the ice age, on the smooth dip slope of the newly uplifted rocks. A sequence of parallel valleys has been formed where the relatively soft calcareous grits and limestones were eroded by streams flowing southwards off the tilted Jurassic dip slope. Many of these valleys developed during the period of active erosion at the end of the last ice age, when the ground was frozen and large quantities of melting water drained off the surrounding ice sheets. When the ice disappeared, many of these valleys were left dry or with only a small stream to occupy them.

Solution of the lime-rich rocks has controlled the shape of these valleys, which have steep walls and are often gorge-like. Water sinks have also developed in places, leaving little or no water at the surface. Some of the water re-emerges as springs at the base of the dip slope, when it reaches the impermeable Kimmeridge clays, along the Helmsley – Filey fault line. Today this springline is the site of long established villages. Occasionally, the streams cut right down through the Corallian limestones and grits,

to the weaker Oxford clays beneath, where they began to broaden. On the tops of the Tabular Hills, small tributary streams which were often seasonal, cut additional deep and narrow rock-walled gulleys known as 'griffs', only a few metres wide. These fall steeply to the floors of the main valleys and the Vale of Pickering and effectively dissect the dip slope further.

Human Influences

Introduction

In earliest post glacial times, the region would have presented a scene of lightly wooded, gentle dip slopes falling southwards to the shrinking marsh-fringed lakes of the Vale of Pickering. The geological and topographical evolution of the region would have provided early man with a variety of upland and lowland sites suitable for exploitation, cultivation, settlement or defence. An ample water supply was assured, not only in the lakes and numerous streams draining off the uplands, but also from the abundant springs which emerged on the valley sides at the base of the lime-rich Jurassic sandstones and the fault bounded margin of the Tabular Hills.

Prehistoric

Human occupation of the Tabular Hills may date back some 7-10,000 years, when nomadic Late Upper Palaeolithic and Mesolithic hunter-gatherers are thought to have made periodic excursions into the region. There is some archaeological and palaeoarchaeological evidence to suggest that these early peoples may have had some effect on the vegetation of the area. However, it was not until after 3,500 BC, with the advent of agricultural and pastoral farming, that the first significant destruction of the woodland for grazing and cereal growing occurred. Woodland destruction and environmental change intensified further after 1,500 BC, during the Iron Age and later Romano-British periods. Permanent, large-scale clearances possibly associated with longer-term settlement and agriculture appeared during this time, particularly on the more fertile soils of the Tabular Hills. The contrast between these soils and the more acidic soils of the higher land to the north, was as important historically as it is now. Settlement at the time was probably concentrated along the springline along the northern side of the Vale of Pickering. From here, Iron Age man was well placed to exploit both the slopes suitable for arable cultivation on the dip slope of the Tabular Hills and the extensive seasonal grazing on the high moors to the north.

In clearing the woodlands of the up land areas, early man had a profound effect on the landscape. By disturbing the forest and hence accelerating soil erosion, leaching of nutrients and podzolisation, he began to destroy the equilibrium of upland areas. The woodlands began to be replaced by peaty soils, heath and moorland. Indeed, evidence suggests that, by the end of the Bronze Age, woodland destruction had substantially begun the process of converting the North York Moors into heather-clad uplands and farmed lowlands. Significant tracts of woodland remained only on the steeper slopes of the valleys and dales.

Settlement History

From the advent of agricultural and pastoral farming in the Neolithic period, there is evidence of a virtually continuous pattern of occupation in the North York Moors, with continued forest clearance and the formation and expansion of peat and heather moorland. Soil fertility and climate were the main factors that determined the density and prosperity of settlement. The Tabular Hills, with their rich south-facing dip slopes of limestone, would have been the wealthiest area, contrasting favourably with the poorer sandy soils of the moorland to the north, and the marshland and lakes of the Vale of Pickering to the south. The eastern and central parts of the hills appear to have been generally more prosperous than the west. This was possibly due to their low altitude, giving a better climate for both agriculture and pastoral farming.

The settlement pattern during the Bronze Age continued that which was established during the Neolithic period. However, there was more pronounced movement towards a ranked society, where wealth and social organisation left their marks in the archaeological record as an increase in both bronze artefacts and earthworks, many of them of a military or aristocratic character.

During the Early Bronze Age, the existence of population pressure, and in parts, declining soil fertility, is demonstrated by the presence on watersheds and valley heads, of lines of round-barrows or tumuli containing collared urn cremations. These marked the territorial boundaries of the different farming units in the area. By the Late Bronze Age, the use of tumuli to demarcate boundaries had ceased, only to be replaced by the construction of massive linear earthworks, forts and enclosures, an activity that continued into the Iron Age.

One of the largest prehistoric dyke systems in the Tabular Hills is found in the Scamridge area. This massive system of dykes runs from the northern escarpment edge, south across the gently sloping plateau into the southern valleys. Aerial photography has recently demonstrated that the system extends for about a mile southward from the surviving dykes, to the vicinity of the present villages at the foot of the dip slope. The function of the dykes is unclear and it appears that they may have been multi-functional: serving as symbols of the societies that built them; as territorial tribal boundaries or barriers for livestock; they could have developed as tracks for herding animals and later into roads; less frequently, they may have become defensive structures. In more recent, medieval times, the dykes at Scamridge were developed into a massive rabbit warren, or commercial rabbit farm, possibly under monastic influence.

For many years, the nature of Iron Age settlement in the Tabular Hills remained obscure. However, archaeological studies during the last thirty years have shown the area to be heavily populated, certainly in the immediate pre-Roman period, when forest clearance for cultivation appeared to be at its most intensive. The pattern of lowland settlement and mixed farming, which originated in the Neolithic period, continued. It seems likely that the whole of the Tabular Hills society was involved in hierarchical tribal cultures, with the eastern part of the Tabular Hills remaining the most wealthy, as evidenced by the largest concentrations of Iron Age square barrows.

By the first century AD, the landscape had taken the form that is familiar today, with people farming the land and tending their flocks as part of a federation of tribal groups known as the Brigante. It is at this time that the Romans began to move north into the area where they established a fort at Malton.

Roman

The settlement archaeology of the Roman period (AD 70 – 410) continued the familiar prehistoric pattern, with extensive farming on the Tabular Hills. Many of the known Iron Age sites continued, apparently in much the same pattern as the present day, and the area generally gives the impression of a peaceful life under the Roman rule. Evidence of Roman settlement is limited. In 1964, excavations of a group of grassy mounds at Beadlam near Helmsley revealed a villa, with heated rooms and one room floored with a geometric mosaic. This building is believed to date from the fourth century AD, its location apparently influenced by the developing markets afforded by Malton and York.

Dark Ages and Medieval

Following the withdrawal of the Romans in AD 410, the period known as the Dark Ages is still obscure, mainly because so few sites have been discovered. However, it is highly likely that the basic settlement pattern and mixed farming economy survived, for it changed little between the Neolithic and the medieval periods. By contrast, the Roman buildings did not always survive – the villas were abandoned and became dilapidated in favour of native houses and a return to an earlier, more traditional style of building.

From the sixth century onwards, the Saxons and other Germanic invaders gradually displaced the Romano-British population. These invaders created villages of their own, accompanied originally by an open-field system. Their villages were 'tuns' (Wrelton, Wombleton and Middleton) and their clearances 'leahs' as in Pockley near Helmsley. It is during these times that the prehistoric linear earthworks frequently emerged as township boundaries, (with the notable exception of the Scamridge dyke system). Kirkdale Minster is a small Saxon church, which nestles in a minor side valley of the main gorge at Kirkdale. The area around the church is currently the archaeological investigation which it is hoped will throw much needed light on life in the immediate post Roman era.

The next major influence on the landscape of the Tabular Hills was the establishment of the large Norman 'honours'. These were feudally controlled estates, based possibly on earlier existing townships. Large castles, such as those at Pickering, Kirkbymoorside and Helmsley were constructed by the Norman barons as centres from which to weald their authority. Many of the quarries may first have been worked during this period to provide stone for building. The Normans brought with them new skills in agricultural and horticulture, in masonry and husbandry and knowledge of reading and writing.

During the twelfth century, the church and particularly the Cistercian monastic order, was responsible for significant developments in the north of England. The Cistercians usually settled in remote areas and brought them into cultivation, ultimately controlling large areas of land. This was typically divided into granges or sheep farms, which were often located at considerable distances from their parent abbeys. Malton Cote in Netherby Dale is one such example. Some of the largest and finest monastic sites in the country are found within close proximity to the Tabular Hills, including Rievaulx Abbey and Ryland Ab-

bey, to the north west and south west of Helmsley respectively; Kirkham Priory, south west of Malton; and Keldhome Priory near Kirkbymoorside.

The medieval period saw the abandonment of many small farmsteads dating from prehistory and the early Saxon period. As the control of the feudal estates diminished, more of the land was divided up amongst smaller owner-occupiers. Centralised villages developed around parish churches surrounded by extensive areas of arable land subdivided into many small linear plots separated only by ploughed furrows.

The medieval period saw the development of a landscape feature that remains visually prominent and highly characteristic of the area today. The pattern of long, linear fields and wave-like 'ridge and furrow' undulations around the nucleated villages and market towns of the Fringe of the Moors is an important remnant of the medieval, open-field strip cultivation system. These fields were originally in cultivation; each landowner having a number of strips scattered around the village. In its heyday, about 1350, open-field cultivation covered nearly one third of the country, mainly in the midlands and north east of England. From then on people began to aggregate strips into the fields that we see today and to privatise them. Gradually, the system disappeared. By 1720, about half the open-field areas, especially in the north, had been privatised. The Parliamentary Enclosure Acts subsequently abolished the remainder, when a grid of straight edge fields replaced strips. The strips today are rarely visible as such, since the fields are often under pasture or planted with the same crop and bounded by hedgerows, thus superficially resembling modern hedged pastures or arable fields.

Another important feature of the medieval Fringe of the Moors landscape was its deer parks. A deer park was a piece of private land surrounded by a deer proof fence called a park pale, inside of which was often a ditch or dyke. The park at Kirkbymoorside had its own hunting lodge, Neville Castle, although it is not clear what the exact purpose of this building was. Deer parks were very common, being status symbols that provided the luxury food of venison. The parks usually contained areas of woodland and grassland 'launds' or lawns. Since these areas of semi-wooded landscape were often quite substantial, they were less common in regions of good farmland, but attractive to manorial lords in marginal regions like the Fringe of the Moors. Little remains of these deer parks today, other than small lengths of dyke at Normanby and Sinnington Park, and the evidence of many place names.

Parliamentary Enclosures

One of the overriding influences on the landscape of the Tabular Hills was the Parliamentary Enclosure Acts of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The regular pattern of straight edged rectangular field boundaries bounded by hedgerows and wide roads lined with avenues of trees resulting from these acts and are an important characteristic of the landscape today. Much of the common land above the villages was enclosed and brought into cultivation at this time. The enclosure acts resulted in a shift in settlement pattern, with a move away from centralised villages to farmsteads located centrally to their landholdings. Local stone, which was used to build the new farmsteads and farm buildings, together with the stone walls on the higher farmland east of Pickering, are a characteristic feature of the area.

Recent Change

There have been changes to the landscape of the Tabular Hills in the last century, but the basic physical and human influences are still very evident.

Whilst the Tabular Hills remained a rural landscape throughout the Industrial Revolution, the construction of the railways in the nineteenth century served as a catalyst to development and local prosperity. The area's first rail line was that linking Pickering to Whitby, which opened in 1836. The York to Scarborough line quickly followed in 1845, with further branch lines in 1853. The line linking Helmsley, Kirkbymoorside and Pickering was opened in 1875, continuing eastwards in 1880 to join the York to Scarborough line. Towns situated along the railways, notably Pickering and Kirkbymoorside expanded and became a focus for growth. Due to the Beeching cuts in 1964, only the York to Scarborough line and the North York Moors steam railway (Pickering to Whitby) remain today.

The main effect of the twentieth century on the landscape of the Tabular Hills has been that of agricultural intensification. Modern farming methods have caused changes to the parliamentary field pattern, resulting in enlarged fields and loss of hedgerows. This is particularly apparent on the higher slopes of the Tabular Hills where field sizes have increased considerably. In contrast, around the towns and many of the villages, the former small scale linear field pattern persists.

Ecological Characteristics

The habitats within the Fringe of the Moors area reflect both the underlying geology and topography and the impact of man. Intensive agriculture has led to a loss of many areas of natural habitat and a decline in associated species. There are, however, important sites remaining. These include ancient semi-natural woodland, calcareous grasslands and neutral grasslands, as well as the all important field boundary hedges and drystone walls, which can serve as valuable wildlife corridors.

The ancient semi-natural woodlands represent an important ecological resource within the area. Much of this type of habitat has been lost throughout Britain and it is important that what remains is preserved. These sites are not only of historic importance, but also often support greater species diversity than secondary woodlands or forestry plantations. The woodlands are generally found on steep valley sides and are dominated by ash, pedunculate oak, birch and wych elm with a varied ground flora beneath, with some alder woodlands in the lower-lying areas. The woodland structure and botanical diversity are important since they support rich assemblages of invertebrates.

The calcareous grassland found within the area is also a decreasing habitat in Britain due to modern agricultural practices, particularly the increased use of fertilisers and herbicides. These grasslands are the most species-rich of all the grassland types found in the Ryedale area, and support species with very localised distributions such as thyme, common rockrose and bee orchid. Old limestone quarries that are left undisturbed also support similar floras. Species-rich neutral grassland are a similarly important habitat because of the wide range of invertebrates they support, particularly butterflies and moths.

Hedges and walls, with their adjacent field margins, form an important part of the landscape and are ecologically valuable. They often provide wildlife corridors and harbour many plants and animals that are unable to survive under intensive agriculture.

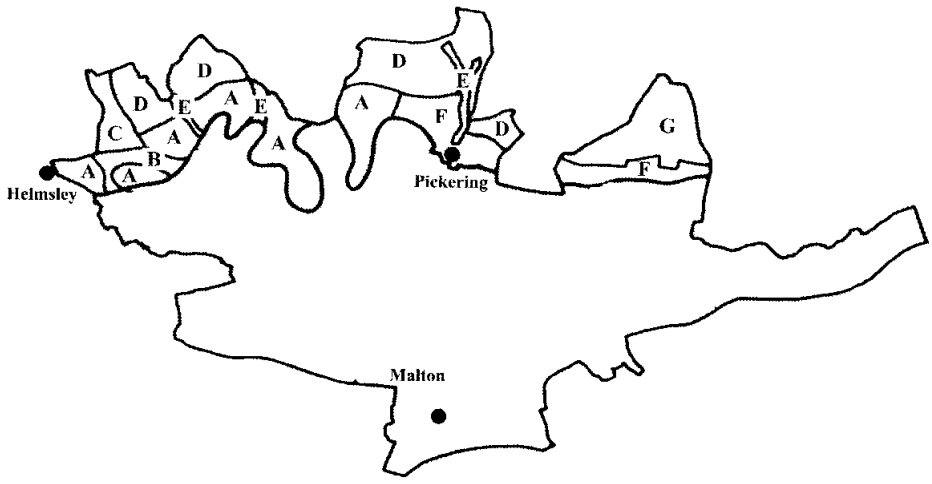
Visual Characteristics

The Tabular Hills presents an expansive rural landscape that includes a number of attractive market towns and villages. The Hills are a fringe of calcareous grit and limestone country set against the high moorland of the North York Moors. They are reminiscent of the Cotswolds, where cultivated pastoral uplands are interjected by deep wooded valleys. Many of the valleys are dry, as streams run underground to emerge as springs along the edge of the Vale of Pickering. The hills are a rich mellow landscape and convey an attractive sense of timelessness.

Whilst there are some villages are situated in elevated parts of the hills, the majority, including the important market towns of Pickering, Kirkbymoorside and Helmsley are strung along the springline at the foot of the Tabular Hills. These settlements share many common characteristics, most notably that they are clustered, and are constructed predominantly from locally quarried limestone, with red pantile roofs. In addition, close to settlements, fields characteristically become smaller and more linear. This, together with field boundary walls, hedges and occasional trees, serves to create a more enclosed and intimate scale of landscape close to towns and villages.

The range of geological and historical influences combine together to produce scenery that has an overall coherence of character and a local diversity and distinctiveness, which can be sub-divided into the following seven local landscape types, each demonstrating particular and individual subtleties of character.

Local Landscape Types within the Fringe of the Moors



Area A **Undulating Farmland**

Area B **Riverside Farmland**

Area C **Sloping Wooded Farmland**

Area D **Sloping Open Farmland**

Area E **Wooded Dales**

Area F **Linear Scarp Farmland**

Area G **High Eastern Farmland**

Part 2 : Landscape Strategy and Guidelines for the Fringe of the Moors

This section provides a broad landscape strategy for the Fringe of the Moors, followed by a number of landscape guidelines designed to guide, restrict or prohibit actions that are considered excessively disruptive to the character of the area and to provide the context for the introduction of mechanisms to encourage land management systems or strategies considered beneficial to the context of the wider landscape and its scenery.

Landscape Strategy

The landscape of the Fringe of the Moors is characterised by gently dipping, south facing slopes, at the base of which nestle picturesque market towns and villages. Reminiscent of the Cotswolds, it is a scenic and highly visible landscape of arable fields and pastures, occasionally dissected by steep wooded dales that have been cut by streams flowing southwards from the bleaker moorland further north.

The Fringe of the Moors is particularly important for its largely unspoilt rural character. Development has generally been restricted and sensitively handled. Even tourism pressures, which have left their mark further east, have largely bypassed the area. Up on the windswept plateau, in the hidden valleys and rural villages, there is a sense of peacefulness and a strong appreciation of the traditional, vernacular farmed landscape with which the area is so well endowed.

Because the area has been relatively undisturbed by development, ancient landscape features, special habitats, archaeological and historical remains have survived intact, including the distinctive visual pattern of medieval linear fields and unspoilt villages with their wealth and variety of rural architecture.

Whilst further study and research is needed to understand the full extent of the area's conservation interest, already it is evident that it is considerable.

To summarise, the Fringe of the Moors has distinct visual, ecological and architectural characteristics. Together these qualities make the Fringe of the Moors a special place, which landscape strategies should seek to conserve and enhance.

Landscape Guidelines

Land Management

Agriculture has considerably influenced the present day appearance of the Fringe of the Moors, and remains the dominant land based activity. Changes in traditional farming practices have, in places, led to field amalgamation and a general decline in landscape structure and habitat diversity.

- *Local deterioration of landscape structure through neglect and removal of field boundary hedgerows and walls should, wherever possible, be halted or reversed through their repair, restoration and reinstatement.*

- *Further deterioration in landscape structure and the character of the countryside, including field amalgamation and neglect or removal of bound ary hedgerows or walls, should be resisted. How ever, this should not preclude opportunities for the sensitive diversification of the rural economy.*

Parts of the Fringe of the Moors are very rich in sites of archaeological and cultural value. Many of these are statutorily protected as Scheduled Ancient Monuments (SAM's). More sites may yet be discovered, particularly, in the wooded dales.

- *Before any significant land management work is considered, the Sites and Monuments Record held by the North Yorkshire Council Heritage Unit, should be consulted in order to form a better understanding and interpretation of any likely adverse effects on sites of cultural importance.*

Much of the Fringe of the Moors, particularly the higher ground and the more secluded valleys, has a quiet, somewhat remote character.

- *It is important that the tradition of low-key enjoyment should be maintained in these areas. Any new proposals should be carefully evaluated to ensure that they would not adversely affect local landscape character, and should, wherever possible, be promoted where they are integral to the public transport network and any long-distance recreational routeways. The introduction of large-scale recreational facilities into the Fringe of the Moors area should be resisted. This is particularly the case where such features could have a potential urbanising or suburbanising effect.*

The underlying rocks of the area have for centuries been quarried as an important building material. The legacy of this activity, is the presence of a number of disused quarries that are often enclosed and well screened from the wider landscape and provide important wildlife refuges and sites of local nature conservation interest.

- *Redundant quarries should be managed to maximise their potential nature conservation value and ecological diversity.*

The underlying limestones have given rise to calcareous grasslands, some of the most species-rich of all grassland types in the Ryedale area, which are also important because of the wide range of invertebrates that they support, particularly butterflies and moths. Calcareous grasslands are a declining habitat in Britain due to modern agricultural practices, in particular the increased use of herbicides and pesticides. Many of the remaining grasslands are found in the disused quarries in the area.

- *It is important that all remaining areas of valuable calcareous grassland habitat, including that in the disused quarries, are evaluated in order that their extent and significance can be fully understood. These important habitats should be protected from further damage and land management regimes introduced that ensure their survival, and re-creation.*

Field Boundaries

Mention has already been made above of the valuable contribution made by the historic field pattern around many of the market towns and villages in the area.

- *It is important that the historic field pattern that surrounds many settlements is conserved and that measures are taken to prevent the further deterioration and loss of field boundaries.*

Hedges and walls together with their adjacent field margins form an important part of the landscape, contributing to its overall visual structure and ecological value. They provide wildlife corridors and harbour many plants and animals, which are unable to survive under intensive agriculture.

- *Future land management policies should seek to ensure that the existing pattern of fields is conserved and that all hedgerows and drystone walls are conserved and enhanced wherever possible.*

In places, traditional hedge management techniques such as hedge laying have been adopted. As well as providing visual and historic interest, it is common for such traditionally managed hedgerows to contain more established species with greater ecological value.

- *Traditional hedgerow management practices should be practised wherever possible.*

Trees and Woodlands

Although woodland cover is limited throughout the Fringe of the Moors, tending to be concentrated on the steeper slopes of the lower valley sides, its character and spatial distribution contributes much to the character of the area. Farm shelterbelts tend to be regularly shaped, are of mixed deciduous composition and are small to medium sized (i.e. 2 - 5 hectares).

- *Existing woodlands, copses and shelterbelts should be conserved and managed to conserve or achieve a natural balanced age structure by selective thinning, which can open up glade areas and allow natural regeneration. Where non-native trees are present, including sycamore, these should be preferentially thinned to allow natural regeneration.*
- *Dead trees should preferable be left on site to provide habitat for invertebrates.*
- *New planting may be necessary in some woodlands, where natural regeneration is likely to be slow or where non-native trees predominate.*

- *Where appropriate, traditional management of woodland as coppice or coppice with standards should be employed.*

- *New woodlands should be similar in terms of sitting, scale, form and composition in order that the existing proportion and distribution of woodlands is conserved.*

The ancient semi-natural woodlands that persist on some of the steep valley sides represent an important ecological and historic resource within the area. Much of this type of habitat has been lost throughout Britain and it is important that what remains is preserved.

- *It is important that any ancient semi-natural woodlands are conserved and are carefully managed to ensure their long-term viability and maximise their nature conservation potential.*

Though limited in number, individual trees have a strong visual presence in the Fringe of the Moors and contribute to the degree of enclosure through the area.

- *It is important that individual trees in the countryside are protected and re-planting measures employed to ensure the continuity of these important landscape elements. In addition, existing trees should be managed to ensure their long-term survival.*

Settlements and Buildings

The Fringe of the Moors is characterised by the presence of a number of market towns and villages located at the foot of the dip slope along its boundary with the Vale of Pickering. These settlements are generally attractive and are popular tourist destinations. The issue of market town expansion is particularly sensitive. In recent years, and for the near future, the presumption of Ryedale District has been for development to be allocated through a policy of controlled expansion. As such, Pickering, Kirkbymoorside and to a lesser extent, Helmsley are subject to particular development pressure.

- *The expansion of these market towns and other smaller settlements should be generally resisted and supported only in exceptional and carefully controlled circumstances.*

Market towns in the Fringe of the Moors, such as Pickering and Kirkbymoorside, tend to be located on rising ground and are visually prominent.

- *Any development on higher slopes should be strongly resisted, unless protected from wider views.*

Many villages are characterised by a clustered arrangement, often around a village green.

- *It is important that the nuclear layout of these villages is maintained. Any new buildings should be sited to ensure that growth is accommodated in a manner that is complimentary to local architectural form and urban fabric.*

Villages tend to have an attractive, mature and established character. This character is in part due to the cohesive and balanced manner in which the traditional building materials of brick, limestone and pantile combine.

- *It is important that any new development takes care to reflect this vernacular and ensures that the existing scale, form and massing of any new development compliments that already exhibited by the village. For example, it would normally be preferable to permit an appropriate extension to an existing dwelling, to the contruction of a new free-standing dwelling. Chalet style housing and bungalows should be considered an inappropriate architectural style and the use of dormer windows and skylights should be restricted.*

- *Consideration should be given to the preparation of 'Village Design Statements'. These statements should establish and agree design principles to be adopted in settlements throughout the Fringe of the Moors. They would be prepared under three main categories: - individual buildings, settlement form and the wider landscape. They should be prepared in co-operation with Parish Councils and, in addition to setting out acceptable design parameters, should provide guidelines within a framework that understands and respects the historical evolution of the settlement.*

Farmsteads, particularly in the more elevated parts of the Fringe of the Moors, have a strong visual presence. This is often emphasised by their sense of remoteness, openness of views, presence of shelterbelts and general elevation.

- *Changes of use, modifications in layout or introduction of new agricultural building can be detrimental to farm character. Re-use of existing buildings is, therefore, preferable to the construction of new buildings. Where modern agri-industrial scale buildings are required and, as far as permitted development rights will allow control, they should be sited away from skylines, employ shelterbelts for screening, be of a height and mass complimentary to existing buildings and be accompanied by appropriate new landscaping.*

Infrastructure

The rising land of the Fringe of the Moors is visually prominent and displays a strong rural character.

- *Urban influences, such as the introduction of transmission towers, power lines, wind farms or even road widening schemes, should be resisted.*

Extending along the southern edge of the Fringe of the Moors is the A170, the most important transportation corridor in the area. This road serves to link a number of settlements including the important market towns of Helmsley, Kirkbymoorside and Pickering. Most of these towns are attractive and the main road, particularly during the summer, can become congested and an unattractive urban feature.

- *Any road improvements, or maintenance operations along this road, should consider its rural context and seek to minimise any further urbanising nfluences. In particular, issues such as hedgerow and hedgerow tree conservation and renewal should be considered and any opportunities to develop the floristic diversity of grass verges encouraged. In addition, it is recommended that localised new planting be considered in a manner that seeks to limit adverse views of the road corridor on the wider landscape.*

- *In order to assist the reduction of traffic speeds and to announce arrival in these towns, consideration should be given to providing entrance signs in a style that compliments local character, similar to those provided for Thornton-le-Dale. These signs or 'gateways' could serve to enhance the immediate setting of settlements.*

The pattern of country lanes in the Fringe of the Moors tends to be linear with lanes extending in a broadly north to south direction up the dip slope of the Tabular Hills. These lanes tend to be bounded by hedgerows, although to the east drystone walls are more common. In addition, the lanes are typically characterised by narrow grass verges.

- *It is important that the character of these lanes should be maintained. Proposals to widen or re-align lanes should generally be resisted, the use of kerbs avoided and efforts taken to conserve, repair and reinstate hedgerow or drystone wall boundaries.*

Part 3 : Description and Guidelines for Local Landscape Types

The following section provides landscape guidelines for the seven *local landscape types* that have identified the Fringe of the Moors area. *Local landscape types* are described under the following headings:

landform and context;
land use and landscape pattern;
settlement;
subjective response; and;
sensitivity to change.

In addition, an overall *landscape strategy* is provided together with more detailed guidelines under the following headings:

land management;
field boundaries;
trees and woodlands;
settlements and buildings; and,
infrastructure.

Priorities for action are also provided to indicate the most urgent needs.