

6: Derbyshire Peak Fringe

July 2009

Peak District

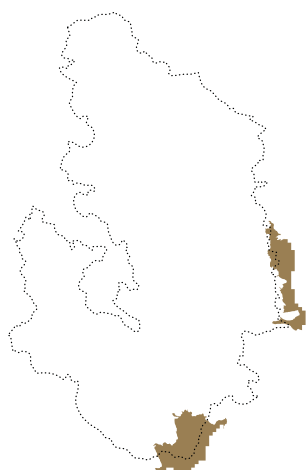
Landscape Character Assessment



Derbyshire Peak Fringe



Looking towards Minninglow © Peak District National Park Authority



Introduction

The Derbyshire Peak Fringe has an intermediate character and occupies a transitional zone, between the uplands of the Peak District to the north and west and the rural lowlands of Derbyshire with small parts of North Staffordshire to the south and east. The eastern parts are strongly influenced by settled areas to the east associated with the urban centres of Chesterfield and Sheffield. There is particular association with the historical coal mining and iron making industries of the settlements. The region has a distinctly undulating topography and contains the upper part of the River Dove.

Physical influences

The physical structure of the Derbyshire Peak Fringe is strongly influenced by the underlying geology, which comprises a sequence of rock types along the southern and the lower eastern flank of the Derbyshire Dome and in the south rock types associated with the Widmerpool Gulf. This gives rise to a mixed geology around Parwich and Tissington comprising a mixture of banded shales and limestones, with very limited outcrops of gritstones belonging to the Millstone Grit series. The Bowland Shale formation also outcrops and consists of a mixture of shales, siltstones and sandstones. There are a variety of limestones in this area; Widmerpool formation predominates consisting of a mixture of limestones and shales. Also evident are Hopedale limestones, Milldale limestones and Bee Low limestones which provide local variations in geology. Around Tissington there is a discrete patch of volcanic geology known as the Tissington Volcanic Member, which contains hydrated tuff-like breccia. This southern area of the Derbyshire Peak Fringe consists of rolling uplands with steep sided valleys and broad floodplains in places.

East from Holymoorside and northwards to Totley the shales give way to a mixture of Millstone Grit and Coal Measures along the eastern fringe of the Derbyshire Dome. This consists of an undulating, in places steeply sloping, topography with steep valley sides created by moorland streams that have eroded through the softer geology and carry water drained off the moorland upland in the west down to rivers like the Rother. A major part of this area is underlain by gritstones and shales belonging to the Millstone Grit series, which have been eroded to produce a distinctly undulating topography. The upstanding, higher ground tends to be formed from gritstone, while the valleys and other lower lying areas are cut into the underlying, softer shales. These beds pass beneath the more rolling Coal Measures that lie along the eastern edge of the Derbyshire Peak Fringe. The Coal Measures consist of inter bedded grey shales, siltstones and sandstones with subordinate amounts of coal and ironstone. The coal and ironstone have all influenced the development of settlements such as Sheffield and Chesterfield as industrial settlements.

Ecological influences

The soils in the Derbyshire Peak Fringe are variable, reflecting differences in the underlying bedrock and the presence of glacial and alluvial drift deposits, particularly in the south. Shallow mineral soils can be found on the gritstone hills and slopes; these tend to produce agriculturally poor pasture land dominated by woodland and rough or permanent pasture. Seasonally waterlogged, gleyed soils overlie the shale beds on lower lying land, where they are used for improved permanent pasture. Occasional deposits of fine loamy soils, derived from till deposited during the last ice age, produce some higher quality pasture and occasional arable fields. Deep, loamy and clayey soils have developed on alluvial deposits on the southern valley floors.

Deciduous ancient semi-natural woodlands are a prominent feature on the steep slopes. Around Holymoorside and north towards Chesterfield the woodlands tend to be upland oakwoods, supporting

pedunculate and sessile oaks along with a hybrid of the two. Other tree species present in these upland woods include downy and silver birch, rowan, holly and hazel. These woods can also support honeysuckle and bluebells and are important for bat species and birds, including the redstart which uses holes in trees for nesting sites. Lower woodlands in the south of the area support ash, birch and hazel intermixed. Alder and willow are key tree species in wetter areas. On flushed slopes, woodlands can support a range of mosses, sedges, ferns and horsetails. Wet woodlands on floodplains support a range of ground flora, including meadowsweet, nettle, marsh marigold and large bitter-cress.

The sloping land tends to support permanent pasture and some rough grazing. In thin soils in more upland locations acid grassland predominates and can support harebells, heath bedstraw, and tormentil along with occasional patches of gorse, bilberry and heather. Improved agricultural land on these lower slopes can have limited ecological diversity, however, where hay meadows are remaining these can support a range of grass species mixed with flowering species including bird's foot trefoil, oxeye daisy, knapweed, self-heal and ribwort plantain. Grasslands in association with the ridge and furrow topography round Parwich and Tissington can be particularly diverse. Verges, when infrequently managed, can be flower rich and include species such as red campion, meadow cranesbill and knapweed. Wet pasture and hay meadows on lower slopes and on floodplains contain various rushes and sedges, meadowsweet and ragged robin and often support small populations of breeding birds such as snipe. The pastoral farmland, including species rich hedges, supports a wide range of bird species including yellowhammer, skylark, linnet and goldfinch.

Human influences

There is a very variable settlement pattern within the Derbyshire Peak Fringe. Nucleated villages, such as Tissington, Brassington and Bradbourne are features of the more productive land in the south of the area. These settlements are often associated with a scattering of farms and roadside dwellings nearby; in more dissected areas and on steeper slopes to the south, there are higher numbers of scattered farmsteads. Tissington, although similar to the other settlements in form, has the added influence of the estate associated with Tissington Hall. Villages are found both in valley bottoms, such as Parwich, and on broad ridgetops, such as at Bradbourne, and are often medieval in origin. The location of former open fields around settlements can often be clearly seen in the remaining ridge and furrow.

On the higher land, in the dissected areas south-west of Sheffield and west of Chesterfield, pastoral agriculture and early industrial activity were the predominant land uses. Here there is a mixture of scattered farmsteads, hamlets and small traditional villages with occasional modern housing development. Although many places have medieval origins, with the exception of some churches, most buildings existing today date from the 17th century onwards when stone became a more commonly available building material. The predominant traditional vernacular building material in the Derbyshire Peak Fringe is gritstone with stone or Welsh slate roofs. Where the

Derbyshire Peak Fringe abuts the White Peak there is often a mixture of limestone and gritstone buildings with stone, slate, or clay tiled roofs reflecting the changing geologies.

The area west of Chesterfield has long been important for industry. Industries here frequently had medieval origins but most increased in scale and impact from the 17th century onwards. There were many local coal mines with shallow workings at various seams. From the 19th century onwards coal mining gradually migrated eastwards away from the Derbyshire Peak Fringe as the coal seams that were being mined ran deeper underground. Local coal supported lead smelting particularly from the 18th century onwards. Other mining included that for fireclay, ganister and ironstones which supported the iron and later the steel industries. There were many lead and iron smelting hearths in the landscape from the 16th century onwards, together with manufacturing sites for early iron tools and implements. These took advantage of the extensive local woodlands which were coppiced for charcoal and white coal (kilm dried wood), the latter used specifically for lead smelting. Many of the woodlands have earthworks at the sites of earthen kilns for charcoal and white coal production. The vestiges of mining, smelting hearths and a variety of small industrial workshops and mills remain in places.

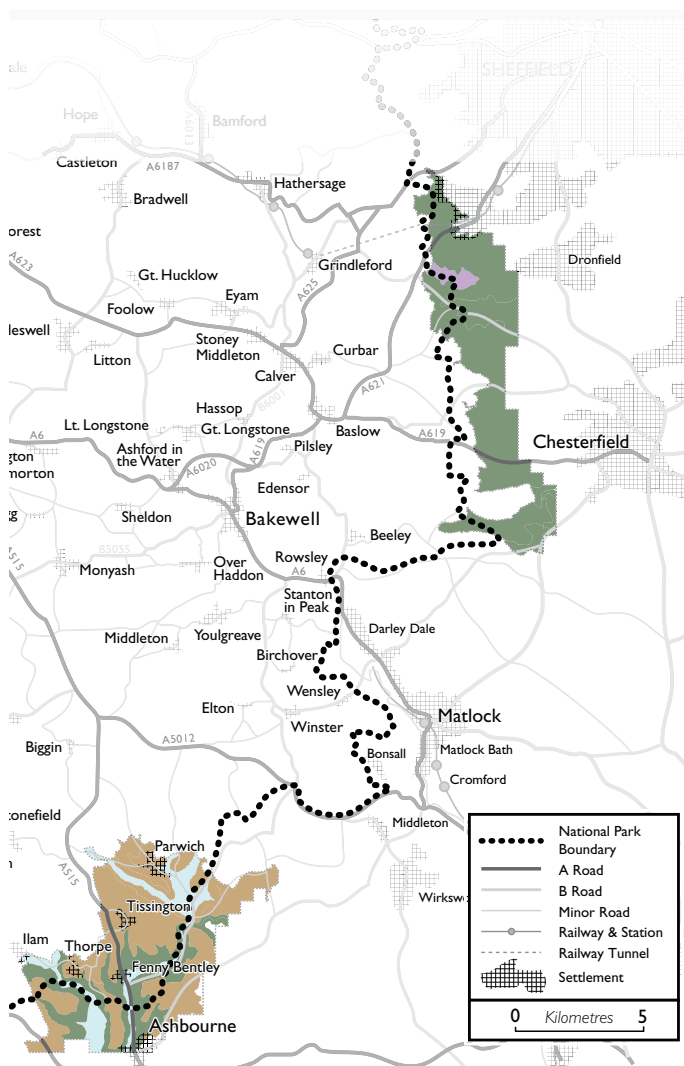
Sense of place

The character of the Derbyshire Peak Fringe is more transitional to that found in other surrounding areas. It includes landscapes that reflect those of the higher Peak District, as well as those that have more in common with the settled lowlands of Derbyshire. The landscape feels more peaceful and less industrialised than the areas further east towards Chesterfield and Sheffield which are more strongly influenced by large scale industrialisation of the 19th and 20th centuries. This level of industrialisation did not occur in the Derbyshire Peak Fringe to the same extent. Away from the urban centres, as the landscape begins to rise up to the moorlands of the Eastern Moors, the landscape is one of enclosed, pastoral agriculture with woodland elements and much less wild in contrast with the moorland uplands of the Eastern Moors.

Around the Parwich and Tissington area, the landscape subtly changes from the limestone plateau. Drystone walls are a feature along with steep slopes which appear wooded because of the hedges and trees that exist there. In the lower parts of this Landscape Character Area there are broad river valleys with floodplains supporting marshland habitats and wet grasslands.

The Derbyshire Peak Fringe can be sub divided into a number of different landscape types, each of which is characterised by a particular aspect of the wider regional character:

- Enclosed Gritstone Upland
- Slopes and Valleys with Woodland
- Village Farmlands on Shale Ridges
- Riverside Meadows





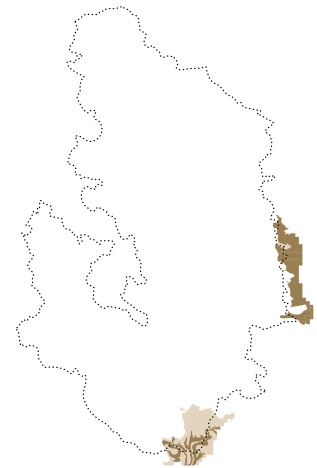
Cyclists on the Tissington Trail © Peak District National Park Authority

Slopes & Valleys With Woodland

An undulating, in places steeply sloping, topography with an interlocking pattern of fields and blocks of woodland both ancient and secondary. There are patches of semi-improved and acid grasslands on steeper slopes with permanent pasture in small fields.



Near Owl Bar © Peak District National Park Authority



Key characteristics

- Undulating, in places steeply sloping, topography
- Irregular blocks of ancient and secondary woodland
- Patches of semi-improved and acid grassland and bracken
- Permanent pasture in small fields enclosed by hedgerows
- Narrow winding, often sunken lanes
- Scattered gritstone farms and loose clusters of dwellings
- Remains of historic coal mining, smelting and other industrial sites

This landscape is found in two locations. In the south it is closely associated with the steep valley sides of the River Dove and its tributary the Bradbourne and Bletch Brooks. In the east the landscape forms a series of interlinked areas along the eastern fringe of the Peak District and creates a natural border between the Peak District and the more urban landscapes to the east.

Geology and landform

This is a landscape with a prominent sloping topography, dissected by stream valleys. To the south of Bradbourne and Tissington the geology consists of interbedded limestone and shales from the Widmerpool formation giving way to the Bowland Shale group, a combination of shales, siltstone and sandstone. West of Chesterfield and Dronfield the landscape is shaped by the underlying Millstone Grit and Coal Measures giving rise to undulating steep slopes.

Soils and vegetation

The soils are varied, reflecting the mix of rock types. They comprise both slowly permeable, base poor gleyed soils with localised shallow or rocky patches over shale and limestone as well as shallower, free draining soils over gritstone. There is widespread pasture in this landscape, including some unimproved grassland. Wetter grasslands support patches of soft rush. Higher up in this landscape character type grassland tends to be acidic and can support patches of bilberry and gorse along with species such as harebell and tormentil.

To the west of Chesterfield, there is significant deciduous woodland cover, made up of some ancient semi-natural woodland interlinked with more recent woodlands. These woodlands often support a good ground flora resource including bluebells and honeysuckle.

Oak woodland predominates, supporting both pedunculate oak and sessile oak with other species including birch, rowan, holly and hazel. Around Fenny Bentley the woodland tends to be associated with the lower slopes. Lower woodlands can have a wet association and support more ash and alder than upland woods. Ground flora also varies to favour more hydrophilic species including meadowsweet and marsh marigold.

Tree cover

This landscape has a strongly wooded character with extensive broadleaved semi-natural woodland, including upland oak wood on the higher slopes. There are patches of wet woodland with alder in flushes. There are some 20th century plantation woodlands, usually coniferous, and there are tree groups around settlements, providing shelter to properties. To the west of Chesterfield many of the woodlands were managed to maximise fuel production for industry and were coppiced, particularly in the 16th to 18th centuries to provide white coal (kiln dried wood) and charcoal. These woodlands included both ancient semi-natural woodland and plantation woodland.

Land use

This is a well wooded pastoral landscape and land use is characterised by permanent pasture for sheep and cattle. As the landscape rises up to higher areas the permanent pastures tend to give way to rough grazing land. North of Holymoorside the remains of old industries, are still evident in places, including mining remains, smelting hearths and mills.

Enclosure

On the slopes between Thorpe and Bradbourne there is a pattern of mostly medium size fields defined by hedgerows. West of Chesterfield and Dronfield the landscape has small to medium sized irregular shaped fields enclosed by mixed species hedgerows, with gritstone walls found on higher slopes. Some fields with irregular boundaries may be associated with assarting: the clearance of wooded land, in order to cultivate land for agriculture. These fields may be historic in that they have marked boundaries for a significant period. Although map evidence is often lacking, the evidence which does exist suggests that some boundaries may be of later medieval or earlier post-medieval date. Gradual modifications to layouts from the 17th to 19th centuries are likely to have taken place.

Settlement and buildings

Between Thorpe and Bradbourne the steep slopes have only a few scattered gritstone-built farmsteads and dwellings with stone slate roofs. The farmsteads on the slopes are probably post-medieval in date and part of a predominantly nucleated settlement pattern with the village sited on nearby better land. Limestone from the adjacent White Peak is the common building material around Parwich.

West of Chesterfield and Dronfield settlement varies, consisting of scattered farmsteads mixed with villages and hamlets. Some of the scattered farmsteads are historic monastic granges in origin such as at Harewood. Some of settlements have medieval origins but most buildings date from the 17th century onwards. The traditional building style is gritstone, with stone tile or Welsh slate roofs.

Transport and access

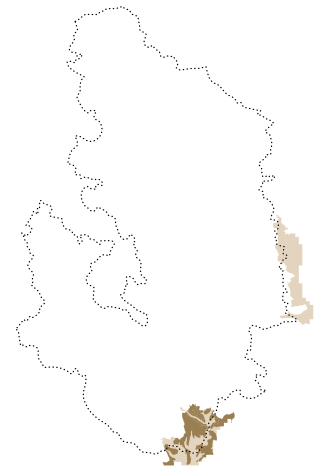
To the south and east there is a network of narrow winding lanes, often sunken, linking the isolated farms and dwellings together. There are some larger roads, some of which were formalised as turnpike roads in the 18th and early 19th centuries.

Village Farmlands on Shale Ridges

A small scale, settled pastoral landscape associated with gently rolling shale uplands, where views are typically filtered through scattered mature trees in field boundaries.



Parwich © Peak District National Park Authority



Key characteristics

- Rolling plateau summits
- Pastoral farmland
- Small to medium sized fields and strip fields, enclosed by hedgerows
- Filtered views through scattered mature hedgerow trees
- Clustered pattern of villages and scattered farms
- Buildings are a mixture of limestone and gritstone

This landscape occurs on five discrete uplands in the south of the Derbyshire Peak Fringe, around Brassington and Bradbourne, at Kniveton, near Parwich, at Tissington and Thorpe, and to the west of the Dove at Blore in Staffordshire.

Geology and landform

This is a landscape of a mixed geology. It is predominantly interbedded limestones and shales from the Widmerpool formation and the Boland Shales formation. The shales are more dominant to the south of Brassington whilst the limestone is more dominant to the west of Tissington. Around Tissington is an area of volcanic rock from the Tissington Volcanic Member which contains hydrated tuff-like breccia. The combination of this geology gives rise to a landscape with an upland rolling topography. In places there is a covering of glacial till.

Soils and vegetation

Soils are mostly slowly permeable or gleyed clay soils with patches of till (glacial clays). Well drained fine loamy soils, shallow in places, over localised outcrops of limestone, occur west of Tissington and elsewhere. This is a largely pastoral landscape that has been improved and farmed for many years. The habitat network is relict with isolated patches of semi-improved grassland and occasional hay meadows. Hay meadows provide an important habitat for a range of grasses and flower species including oxeye daisy and knapweed. Verges that receive infrequent management can sometimes support flowering species including meadowsweet, red campion and meadow cranesbill.

Tree cover

This is an enclosed landscape where views are often filtered through densely scattered hedgerow trees in field boundaries. Tree species include ash and oak with some alder on wetter areas. There is an avenue of lime trees along the main road to Tissington village possibly associated with the estate influence on the local landscape here.

Land use

Permanent pasture dominates this landscape with a mixture of improved fields and occasional semi-improved fields. Much of the land around Tissington is still managed by the Fitzherbert's Tissington Hall Estate.

Enclosure

There is a well defined pattern of small to medium sized fields bounded mainly by mixed species hedgerows. The fields often overlay extensive surviving ridge and furrow and in addition, around Brassington, Parwich and Thorpe there are fossilised strip fields. Much of the enclosure was probably created in post-medieval times, whereas in the medieval period there were extensive open fields. The contrasting enclosure patterns reflect a complex intermixture: some communities retained traditional rights to open field strips and therefore the patterning was fossilised, and in other communities the links to the open fields were lost and so the patterning was not fossilised. In some cases, as at Tissington, the loss may be related to estate control, which enabled tenanted farmlands to be reorganised more readily.

Settlement and buildings

Settlement consists of a clustered pattern of villages within a scattering of outlying farmsteads. The villages all have medieval origins, while many of the outlying farmsteads may have been established after the medieval period. One notable exception is Lea Hall near Tissington where there are earthworks of a deserted medieval village. Although buildings may have a medieval origin all of today's buildings, except some churches, date from the 17th century onwards and are built in stone. Buildings are simple and robust in design, being a mixture of either gritstone or limestone, with stone slate or Staffordshire blue tiled roofs.

Tissington Hall was built in 1609 since when it has been modified several times. There is a unity to the buildings in the village here, giving it the feel of a quintessential English village because in its present form design has been controlled by the estate.

Transport and access

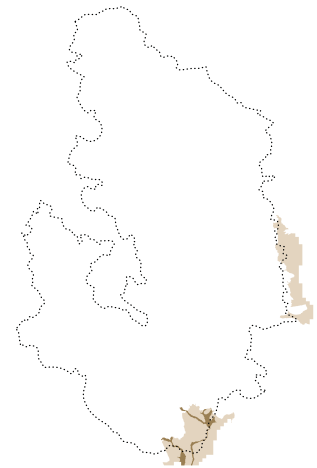
Settlement in this landscape is well connected by a network of minor and major roads, narrow trackways and footpaths. The former Tissington railway line is now an important recreational route for walking and cycling. A small area of this character type, north of the settlement of Thorpe, is open access land.

Riverside Meadows

This is a pastoral landscape characterised by a meandering river channel in a flat alluvial floodplain. Views are often tightly framed by lines of riverside trees. Patches of wetland vegetation are a distinctive feature associated with the river channel.



River Manifold nr Ilam © Peak District National Park Authority



Key characteristics

- A flat alluvial river corridor
- Meandering river channel with shingle beds and marginal vegetation
- Seasonally waterlogged alluvial soils
- Grazing meadows, often with patches or extensive areas of wet grassland
- Dense waterside and scattered hedgerow trees
- Regular pattern of small to medium sized fields divided by hedges

Riverside Meadows occur on all the valley bottom areas of the Derbyshire Peak Fringe including the lower valley of the River Dove and those at Bradbourne and Bletch Brooks.

Geology and landform

A key feature of this landscape is the flat alluvial floodplain across which the rivers meander. These rivers have developed on a number of different geological formations, in the north this is mainly the relatively soft Namurian shales from the Bowland Shale formation. The shales give way, below Bradbourne, to limestone interbedded with shales from the Widmerpool formation. Further south from Fenny Bentley, the geology changes again to a sandstone interbedded with conglomerate formation (the Hawksmoor formation).

In places the rivers have cut through the harder gritstone, resulting in a much narrower alluvial floodplain defined by steeper valley sides. This is particularly noticeable in part of the Dove Valley and the lower stretch of the Bradbourne Brook. As a result the width of the floodplain can vary from more than half a kilometre to less than 50 metres at its narrowest point.

Soils and vegetation

The soils are clayey loams, derived from the underlying alluvial deposits which have built up over time as rivers have flooded and deposited material they have carried. Patches of wet grassland are a feature throughout much of this landscape. Where the floodplain retains flood water for long periods of time extensive areas of wetland and marshy riverside vegetation can sometimes be found and support specialist species including ragged robin, common marsh bedstraw and occasionally the common spotted orchid.

Tree cover

Tree cover is extensive throughout the landscape. It is made up of densely scattered riverside trees, primarily of alder and willow, with scattered hedgerow trees of oak and ash across the floodplain. In places there are small copses of willow carr.

Land use

Due to heavy soils and seasonal waterlogging the main land use in this character type is permanent pasture, grazed by cattle and sheep.

Enclosure

The river is fringed by a regular pattern of small to medium sized fields, normally one and in places two fields deep. Fields are mainly enclosed by straight thorn hedges. Some fields have irregular boundaries, these may be associated with the process of assarting where forested land was cleared in order to cultivate land for agriculture. These fields may be historic in that they have marked boundaries for a significant period. A major exception to this character exists in the broad valley bottom downstream from the village of Parwich. Here, there are many small and narrow fields that fossilise parcels of medieval open field strips, together with the actual ridge and furrow which frequently survives here and in nearby areas of the valley.

Settlement and buildings

Historically settlement did not develop on floodplains, due to possible flooding risks. However, in parts of the Dove Valley and Bletch Brook areas the underlying geology of shales gives rise to gently sloping land with reduced flood risk enabling the establishment of some isolated farmsteads. In addition to isolated scattered farmsteads, parts of the villages of Fenny Bentley and Mapleton have developed on the edge of the floodplain. Buildings are predominantly a limestone rubble construction with gritstone detailing and stone slate roofs. Modern development can be found in isolated locations.

Transport and access

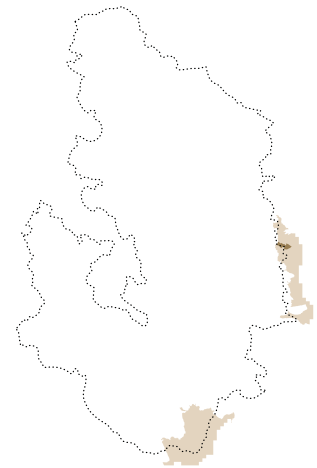
Most historic routes avoided the floodplain and the wet boggy treed landscape, moving through the landscape on higher and drier land. Roads often follow the edge of the floodplain, especially along the Bradbourne Brook. There are numerous footpaths along the Riverside Meadows.

Enclosed Gritstone Upland

An enclosed landscape on former moorland, associated with a high, gently undulating ridge summit. This is a landscape of isolated stone farmsteads, straight roads and regular fields enclosed by drystone walls.



Looking towards Harewood Grange © Peak District National Park Authority



Key characteristics

- Rolling uplands
- Thin soils over gritstone bedrock
- Remnant patches of rough land
- Permanent pasture and rough grazing enclosed by gritstone walls
- Regular pattern of medium to large fields
- Straight roads with wide verges of grass
- Isolated sandstone farmsteads and cottages with stone slate roofs

This landscape occurs on the edge of the Eastern Moors character area in one location at Lidgate near Holmesfield.

Geology and landform

This landscape is associated with broad, gently undulating gritstone uplands, in places rising steeply to higher open moorlands. The Yorkshire Coalfield underlies much of this landscape character type, although sandstone formations also exist here. To the east, near to Owl Bar there is Loxley Edge Rock formation consisting of undifferentiated sandstones. In the west, around Lidgate, Greenmoor rock is the underlying geology, associated with the coalfields; this is a weakly micaceous distinctively green sandstone.

Soils and vegetation

Soil types range from free draining podzols on steeper slopes to wetter soils on gentler summits. All the soils are characterised by their impoverished, acidic origin. There is little semi-natural vegetation; fields are mainly improved grasses, but there is some bracken and gorse on the edge of the area providing local variation. Verges occasionally support relict heath vegetation including bilberry and heather. There are some patches of soft rush on the wetter soils, which often support small populations of breeding birds such as snipe.

Tree cover

The sheep grazing, poor soils and exposure restrict tree growth making this an essentially a treeless landscape. There are some trees associated with settlement, these are mainly scattered oak, ash and sycamore.

Land use

This is a pastoral landscape of improved or semi-improved permanent pasture with sheep and cattle grazing and some rough grazing. There are some reseeded grass leys, however, soils are mostly of poor quality and some fields are dominated by rushes.

Enclosure

Land was enclosed from moorland that was waste and commons prior to enclosure. The western half of this ridge has Parliamentary Enclosure fields dating from the early 19th century creating a grid of medium to large rectangular fields enclosed by gritstone drystone walls. The enclosure at the eastern end of the ridge is less regular and possibly pre-dates the Parliamentary Enclosure, being created earlier in the post-medieval period.

Settlement and buildings

Settlement is restricted to the hamlet of Lidgate and wayside farmsteads and cottages which are dated from the time the landscape was enclosed. Buildings are gritstone with stone tiled roofs. There has been some modern infill development.

Transport and access

This is a remote landscape with only three roads running through it. The roads are relatively straight with even verges. One road is a main road crossing through the landscape and connecting places such as Sheffield and Chesterfield with the Peak District. Such routes may have medieval origins, having been improved into turnpike roads before being further formalised into the roads of today. There is no open access land in this character type.

Overall Strategy



View from Tissington Trail © Peak District National Park Authority

The Derbyshire Peak Fringe is a transitional landscape that reflects both the higher landscapes of the Peak District and the lower settled landscapes of Derbyshire. This undulating pastoral landscape of slopes and valleys with clustered settlements, scattered farmsteads and fields enclosed by hedges and drystone walls has a strong cultural heritage, evidenced by the extensive ridge and furrow system in the fields surrounding villages. Fragmentation of field boundaries, tree and woodland cover and a further loss of diversity would have a detrimental impact on landscape character. Therefore, there is a need to protect and manage these features to maintain a strong landscape character in the future. The transitional nature of this landscape means that good partnership working with neighbouring authorities will ensure a successful outcome.

The overall strategy for the Derbyshire Peak Fringe should therefore be to:

Protect and manage the tranquil pastoral landscapes and the distinctive cultural character through sustainable landscape management, seeking opportunities to enhance woodlands, wetlands, cultural heritage and biodiversity.

This can be achieved by ensuring that there is:

- an approach of conserving or enhancing the distinctive clustered settlement pattern, field pattern and other cultural landscapes
- enhanced structure and extent of tree and woodland cover in appropriate locations
- a linked network of habitats and a more diverse river corridor within a sustainable land management system



Cyclists near Parwich © Peak District National Park Authority

To achieve this strategy there are particular priorities for each of the different landscape character types in the Derbyshire Peak Fringe.

Slopes and Valleys with Woodland

This is a small-scale pastoral landscape on the valley sides of the Dove and Bradbourne Brook and tributaries. There are three other small outliers within the National Park, at Harewood Grange, Smeely Woods and Blacka Moor. It is heavily wooded in places, with a mixture of wet and dry woodland. There are groups of trees around buildings, with scattered trees along boundaries and patches of acid grassland on steeper slopes. The priority is to protect the mosaic and diversity of existing woodlands, boundary trees, grasslands, cultural heritage components and semi-natural habitats and seek opportunities to create new woodland where appropriate.

Village Farmland on Shale Ridges

This is the settled pastoral landscape of the Derbyshire Peak Fringe around Tissington and Thorpe. It consists of a clustered pattern of villages and outlying farmsteads with strip fields of Medieval ridge and furrow, enclosed by hedges. The field systems surround their associated limestone/gritstone villages with traditional stone-built buildings. The priority should be to protect the historic pattern of field boundaries, the distinctive historic, clustered settlement pattern and the quality and setting of traditional buildings, whilst restoring the biodiversity of the pastoral farmland and providing resources for visitors within sustainable farming systems.

Riverside Meadows

This is a pastoral landscape of small fields and isolated farmsteads, characterised by a meandering river channel with scattered riverside trees, historic meadows and patches of wetland vegetation. The priority is to restore the diversity of the river corridor landscape and manage it to provide flood water storage and help prevent flooding elsewhere along the river corridor.

Enclosed Gritstone Uplands

This is a very small area of pastoral upland landscape near Owler Bar, with drystone walls, straight roads and isolated farmsteads. Agricultural improvement and grazing have reduced the ecological diversity of the pastures. The priority here is to protect the historic field pattern.

Issues of change

Conservation

The Derbyshire Peak Fringe comprises the lower lying landscapes around Tissington/Fenny Bentley in the south and a few fragments of higher land to the east of the National Park, i.e. Holmesfield. There has been a decline in the condition of boundaries: hedgerows can be gappy at the base and overgrown, whilst drystone walls are sometimes in poor condition through the removal of stones and a lack of maintenance. In some places, there is evidence of hedgerow removal. This erosion of boundary features has resulted in a damaged cultural pattern which compromises the visual unity of the historic landscape; hedgerows in a poor condition also reduce ecological value.

The historic ridge and furrow, often associated with Medieval open field systems and located close to settlements, is being damaged on a piecemeal basis by modern agricultural practices such as ploughing. This represents a loss of a valuable cultural heritage resource. In places, permanent pasture is being ploughed up, reducing the ecological character and value of the landscape.

There is a need to ensure that the cultural heritage resources of the built environment are recognised and celebrated into the future, e.g. older buildings including those associated with Medieval granges and occasional field barns. Equally, historical features and landscapes require enhanced management, as some are being overwhelmed by bracken and scrub growth.



Field near Parwich © Peak District National Park Authority

Climate change implications

Climate change may affect these landscapes in a number of ways. Increased rainfall and increases in the energy of rainfall are likely to exacerbate flood risk and the impacts of flooding events. Increased rainfall will also exacerbate erosion, damage to soils and to infrastructure such as footpaths and roads. Flooding and erosion may increase silt deposition on land which is of value for conservation. There has been an increase in the number of floodplain ponds in the area, and this may help to mitigate flooding through water storage; equally, the Riverside Meadows, if appropriately managed, may provide a resource for storing flood water and reducing flood risks further down the river corridor.

Demography, housing and employment

As with other fringe landscapes, there is concern that the national housing targets could impact on the landscapes around the boundaries of the National Park and thus affect the setting of the Park. The design of newer housing around the Derbyshire Peak Fringe does not always respond to the design of traditional older properties, and this could lead to a fragmentation and homogenisation of the settlement character of the area. There is a shift associated with the changing agricultural sector, with some farms being bought as large domestic properties rather than as working entities. This ownership change is regarded as creating a landscape which is 'tidied' as opposed to a working landscape. Such ownership changes can also be associated with separation of farmstead and land holdings, resulting in increased trends to isolated, modern farm buildings sited away from farmsteads.



Tissington farming © Peak District National Park Authority

Tourism and recreation

This is a valued landscape that provides opportunities for a large number of visitors to enjoy activities including family walks, bike rides and visiting historic villages.

Farming and forestry

The landscapes in the Derbyshire Peak Fringe tend to be intensively managed, with a consequent loss of cultural features, historic landscapes and natural landscapes. There is some evidence of a decline in agricultural activity along the eastern fringe of the Park near Dronfield. This is indicated by the presence of horse pastures with post and rail fences.

Ancient woodland cover is well established in the Slope and Valleys with Woodland landscapes along the eastern fringe of the Park. It is much less established in the southern area along the valley sides of the Bradbourne and Bletch Brooks. In the latter area, tree cover consists of patches of secondary woodland and scrub, with only localised ancient woodlands. Woodland becomes more significant again to the west, in the Dove Valley. Elsewhere in the Derbyshire Fringe, tree cover is more or less restricted to scattered, mature hedgerow trees.

Minerals and resources

There are no active quarries in the area although there are the historic remnants of small gritstone quarries. These are seen as an integral part of the cultural landscape.

Energy and infrastructure

There is an increasing national and local demand for renewable energy schemes, in particular wind and water power sources. The impact of inappropriate wind generation projects could adversely affect the setting of historic landscape features, amenity value and tranquillity. There is a visual impact of existing infrastructure associated with power supply, e.g. overhead electricity cables. In places there may be opportunities for developing renewable energy supplies, including local small hydroelectric schemes, planting native woodland and improving woodland management linked to local wood fuel usage and other renewable energy sources.

Road safety is a major issue in the Derbyshire Peak Fringe, leading to an increased number of larger road signs. High levels of vehicular use are increasing damage to roads, walls and verges, and creating an increased demand for parking, particularly at honey-pot areas such as Tissington.

In recent years there has been an increase in the visual intrusion of communications infrastructure, particularly telecommunication masts. This can impact on the setting of archaeology, historic features, buildings and landscapes.

Landscape guidelines

Derbyshire Peak Fringe

Slopes and Valleys with Woodland	Village Farmlands on Shale Ridges	Riverside Meadows	Enclosed Gritstone Uplands
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Protect





Protect historic parkland landscapes				
Protect and maintain historic field barns				
Protect and maintain drystone walls, hedgerows and historical enclosure patterns				

Manage

Manage the historical patterns of development				
Manage the network of minor roads to maintain character and local access				
Manage and enhance woodlands				
Enhance the diversity of agricultural grasslands				
Manage and enhance linear tree cover and amenity trees				
Manage and enhance wetland landscapes				

Plan

Create new native broadleaved woodland				
Develop small-scale renewable energy for local needs				
Create, expand and link wetland landscapes				

-  This is a priority throughout the landscape character type
-  This is a priority in some parts of the landscape character type, often associated with particular conditions/features
-  This is not a priority but may be considered in some locations
-  This will generally be inappropriate in this landscape character type

Landscape guidelines explanation

Protect

Protect historic parkland landscapes

Historic parkland is an important localised feature of the Derbyshire Peak Fringe, particularly at Tissington. There is a need to conserve the cultural integrity of these landscapes whilst enabling them to evolve. Opportunities should be taken to work with landowners to enhance the biodiversity of historic parklands where the structure and character can be appropriately maintained. The production of management plans and partnership approaches with landowners should be considered to achieve these objectives.



Tissington Trail © Peak District National Park Authority

Protect and maintain historic field barns

Traditional farm buildings are of significant value to the local character of the landscape and it is important to maintain the fabric and appearance of such buildings. Isolated field barns are a special cultural feature in the Derbyshire Peak Fringe, especially in the Riverside Meadows and the Village Farmlands on Shale Ridges around Parwich. Where they can no longer be maintained in agricultural use (animal welfare standards mean that they are no longer appropriate for housing stock), careful consideration needs to be given to appropriate alternatives. Changes to the appearance of either the building or its surroundings should be avoided, especially where these are not in keeping with the rural character of the landscape. Conversion to residential use would be particularly inappropriate.

Protect and maintain drystone walls, hedgerows and historical enclosure patterns

There is a mixture of enclosure by drystone walls and hedgerows in the Derbyshire Peak Fringe. Enclosure by drystone walls is more common in the upland landscapes of the Derbyshire Peak Fringe. These are often in a declining condition leading to a loss of the historic field pattern, and these walls would benefit from enhanced management. Hedgerows predominate in the lower lying landscapes. These can often be in poor condition and require enhanced management to ensure good condition, which improves their ecological functions and ensures retention of the cultural and visual pattern.

Manage

Manage the historical patterns of development

The clustered settlement pattern with scattered outlying farms is a unique feature of the Village Farmlands on Shale Ridges. It is important that future development protects the sense of place and historical development patterns where possible. New development should respond positively to the historic settlement pattern and density, local materials and traditions and opportunities sought to mitigate the urbanising character of some past development. In addition, opportunities to influence potential future development that lies outside but has an impact on the National Park, considering siting, layout, design and materials should be taken. Traditional buildings are an important feature and their renovation and maintenance should be encouraged. Locating new agricultural buildings can impact on landscape character and opportunities should be taken to guide site selection.

Manage the network of minor roads to maintain character and local access

The network of minor roads should be managed to maintain their local, small-scale and rural character to ensure good local access whilst discouraging inappropriate driving. Verges and cultural features should be maintained and enhanced, and the impact of signage minimised.

Manage and enhance woodlands

Some woodland is neglected or would benefit from enhanced management. Opportunities should be taken to enhance diversity and improve woodland productivity, whilst conserving cultural heritage features. There may be opportunities to link woodland management to local wood fuel schemes and reduce reliance on traditional carbon-based energies.

Enhance the diversity of agricultural grasslands

Many grasslands have been improved and reseeded with a consequent loss of species diversity. There is a need to manage these grasslands in a more sustainable way that retains species diversity whilst supporting productive agriculture. Opportunities to extend and enhance the management of unimproved grasslands should be sought; the grasslands of the Riverside Meadows could be enhanced for use as a flood water storage resource and to help prevent flooding elsewhere along the river corridor.

Manage and enhance linear tree cover and amenity trees

On the Village Farmlands on Shale Ridges and in the valley landscapes, linear trees along field boundaries and stream-lines form an important component of the tree cover. There is a need to manage these trees to ensure a balanced age structure. Groups of amenity trees are often associated with settlement and the use of appropriate species should be encouraged.

Manage and enhance wetland landscapes

Within the pastoral landscapes of the Riverside Meadows, there has been a decline in the wetland landscapes. Where these habitats occur they are an important landscape resource. It is therefore important that the remnants of semi-natural vegetation are managed and enhanced.



Pasture near Parwich © Peak District National Park Authority

Plan

Create new native broadleaved woodland

There are opportunities to extend woodland cover without affecting cultural heritage features and historic landscapes within the Slopes and Valleys with Woodland. In places there are opportunities to extend woodland by natural regeneration, although a balance will be needed between woodland expansion and the retention of unimproved grassland. Increased woodland cover creates areas of shelter and shade and may be useful for mitigating the impacts of climate change. In the Riverside Meadows there are only limited opportunities for wet woodland creation due to potential impacts to flooding severity of increased woodland cover on the floodplain.

Develop small-scale renewable energy for local needs

The Slopes and Valleys with Woodland and Riverside Meadows are suitable for the development of water power and local wood fuel supplies, helping to reduce reliance on traditional carbon-based energy. Opportunities should be sought within new built development and management of woodland to increase local renewable energy supply, where it would have a neutral impact on the character of the area and its component parts. Where appropriate seek positive measures to reinforce the local landscape character as part of new development.

Create, expand and link wetland landscapes

There has been a decline in the wetland habitats within the pastoral landscapes of the Riverside Meadows. Opportunities should be sought to create and expand wetland landscapes and linking existing features. In addition opportunities should be sought to create diverse flood meadows with natural, dynamic rivers and streams. Such reintroduction would enhance the ecological character of the landscape whilst providing flood management services, helping to reduce flooding elsewhere along the river corridor.



Farms near Tissington © Peak District National Park Authority

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