

5: Dark Peak Yorkshire Fringe

July 2009

Peak District

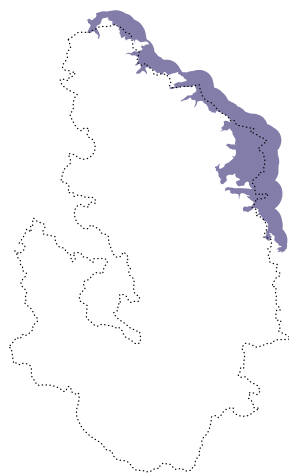
Landscape Character Assessment



Dark Peak Yorkshire Fringe



Cartworth nr Holmfirth © Peak District National Park Authority



Introduction

The Dark Peak Yorkshire Fringe lies to the east of the Dark Peak and Eastern Moors and while this character area displays many of the characteristics of the Peak District it is also strongly influenced by the more settled areas to the north and east, associated with the urban settlements of Sheffield and Huddersfield. The landscape comprises upland areas that have largely been enclosed. In places, settlement is associated with industry as well as agriculture including localised wool manufacturing, coal mining and iron production. Sloping land is often well wooded and it is this characteristic that defines the upland edge along the margin of the Dark Peak. Much of this land still retains a strong pastoral character despite the urban and, in some cases, industrial influences of the towns and villages. Settlements such as Penistone, Holmfirth and Stocksbridge have a strong industrial heritage often relating to wool, cotton and cloth production as well as mining and engineering industries. Other settlements have remained much smaller such as Bradfield with its two castles and Ewden despite their past industrial heritage.

Physical influences

The Dark Peak Yorkshire Fringe comprises an extensive area of Carboniferous rocks along the eastern fringe of the Derbyshire Dome. A major part of this sequence is made up of a mixture of shales and gritstones 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 Yorkshire Coalfield that lies along the eastern edge of the Dark Peak Yorkshire Fringe but in some places impinge well within it. The Coal Measures consist of interbedded grey shales, siltstones and gritstones with occasional beds of coal and ironstone (the latter dispersed through particular beds of other rocks). Past soil surfaces (paleosols) with high kaolinite content exist within the Coal Measures. The coal, ironstone and paleosols in the form of ganister and fireclay have all influenced the development of Sheffield as an iron and later a steel making city.

The landscape falls away from the higher summits of the Dark Peak into the lower lying valleys and floodplains in the valley bottoms. Deep, narrow, steep sided cloughs within this sloping ground carry water from the moorland summits into the River Don and Rother via a number of tributaries including the Sheaf, Porter, Loxley and Rivelin. These east flowing rivers reflect the fact that the Anglian ice sheets melted in the east first and so influenced post-glacial drainage patterns and the main ice streams that flowed on either side of the Peak District. During tundra peri-glacial conditions wind erosion damaged the Millstone Grit, creating a dust, known as loess, which was deposited across the Peak District.

Ecological influences

The soils in the Dark Peak Yorkshire Fringe are variable, reflecting differences in the underlying geology. Shallow, in places impoverished, mineral soils can be found on the gritstone hills and slopes, which tend to produce agriculturally poor land dominated by permanent pasture with patches of rough land containing scattered relict heather and bilberry reflecting the previous moorland character.

The steep sided cloughs tended to remain unimproved due to their steep topography and can provide variation between damp and dry habitats. Woodland in these cloughs tends to be broadleaved and a combination of oak mixed with ash, hazel, rowan, birch and, in wetter areas, alder. The floors of woodlands are often carpeted with bluebells, dog's mercury and yellow archangel. Conifer plantations are often, though not exclusively, associated with reservoir valley sides, and may have patches of semi-natural woodland or broadleaf plantation within them. The flora is generally limited but can be of importance for fungi. Several birds of note are associated with the plantations, such as goshawk and crossbill.

In lower areas, as the cloughs widen, the lower valley slopes are characterised by enclosed land on slowly permeable, seasonally waterlogged soils that support some unimproved pastures and hay

meadows. The former typically comprise acid grassland dominated by fescues and bents, with herbs such as tormentil and heath bedstraw and patches of gorse and bracken, whilst the hay meadows provide a range of flora such as yellow rattle, knapweed, oxeye daisy, bird's foot trefoil and common cat's ear. On less well drained land, where the ground is wetter, the pastures often support soft rush and can provide a breeding ground for wading birds, notably lapwing, curlew and snipe.

Human influences

The Dark Peak Yorkshire Fringe has a close association with pastoral agriculture and early industrial activity. The location at the junction between the Millstone Grit uplands of the Peak District and the Yorkshire Coalfields made it a good location from which to exploit the resources of both. This location in between two significant regions gives these fringe landscapes a unique character different from the higher land further west within the Dark Peak and the lower ridges and valleys further east within the Coalfields.

The settled enclosed moorland in the north has long been managed for sheep rearing: there are records of wool production there in the 12th century. It provides suitable conditions for the rearing of sheep, while springs produce softer water which is ideally suited to the processing of wool into cloth. These activities have strongly influenced the character of the landscape and in places they culminated in the development of unusual upland settlement and enclosure patterns. These continued to exist after early industrialisation had increased the scale of cloth production and moved much of it to larger mills, which were more conveniently situated near fast flowing rivers in the valley bottoms. Larger populations grew up, associated with the mills and cloth production.

The steeper slopes of the Dark Peak Yorkshire Fringe are more sparsely settled with many large areas of ancient semi-natural woodland. Pastoral farming is now a dominant land use in these more wooded landscapes. Some settlements, including the village of Bradfield and many smaller hamlets and farms, have a history going back to the medieval period, if not before, and are primarily agricultural in character. In the past the woodlands were often associated with charcoal, white coal (kiln dried wood) and timber production supporting industry. The landscape was a hive of early industrial activity: Woodland was a valuable resource for charcoal production and was used for iron smelting, continuing in use until the 19th century. Equally important, to the west of Sheffield, was the production of white coal, which was produced in vast quantities in the 16th to 18th centuries to provide fuel for lead smelters located on the west side of the city. In both cases, woodland was coppiced to increase yield to maximise fuel production.

Coal for domestic and industrial use was mined in many shallow mines near the outcrop of several seams within the Yorkshire Fringe. There are records of small scale mining in the 12th century. From the 16th and 17th centuries, the growth in early industrial activity increased coal production. Mining grew exponentially from the 18th century to meet the demand for local coking coal for large scale iron

and steel smelting as well as steam power. As easily won resources became rarer, the focus of mining moved eastwards into the lowlands, with large mines developed to reach coal at depth. Gannister and, in soft form, fireclay was also mined but on a much smaller scale, mainly in the Porter valley and near to Penistone. These deposits which have a high kaolinite content are used in the production of fire bricks, refractory moulds, furnace linings and are essential to iron and steel production.

Many transport routes cross through this moorland fringe area, these are characterised by former packhorse routes and turnpike roads. In turn, these have influenced some of the settlements which capitalised on their location adjacent to the open moors to provide resting opportunities for travellers before and after the ordeal of crossing the inhospitable open moors. At Ringinglow, a toll house and inn developed at the junction of two major turnpike roads, one which ran from Buxton to Sheffield and the other from Chapel-en-le- Frith to Sheffield. The small village of Bolsterstone is located on a salt route from Cheshire to Yorkshire.

Later human influences on the Dark Peak Yorkshire Fringe include the construction of reservoirs to provide water for the rapidly growing settlements such as Sheffield and Holmfirth. Reservoir construction started in the late 1830s and varies in scale. The reservoirs are often associated with plantation woodlands around their shores with gritstone walling and dams. They now offer opportunities for recreation, often having tracks through the woodlands for cycling or walking.

Although the large settlements within or at the edge of the Dark Peak Yorkshire Fringe are often based around, or influenced by, industry and production, today these have only a limited influence on the surrounding landscape which is now largely rural and agricultural in character.

Sense of place

As the landscapes fall away from the open moorlands of the Dark Peak they include exposed upland settlements of farmsteads with gritstone weavers' cottages in the north. Moving down from the uplands on to the valleys and slopes, the landscape becomes less wild and more pastoral, with walled and hedged fields and extensive woodlands. The Yorkshire Fringe landscapes are often sparsely settled, with a strong sense of remoteness and tranquility. The landscape is settled with gritstone walled enclosures and isolated gritstone farm properties. Improved grassland and the patches of woodland create variety in both texture and colour. Moorland vegetation, such as bilberry, still exists along field boundaries and verges. In places the landscape remains unsettled, particularly on steeper ground and up into the cloughs, where access is limited.

Some places, such as the settled enclosed moorland and the larger settlements in the northern valleys below these enclosed moors, were once heavily populated and supported pre-industrial wool production. The landscape still supports wool production but processing is no longer carried out locally. Today the slopes and valleys contrast with their industrial past which is sometimes hard to identify in the landscape where natural elements such as streams and woodland are now the identifying features.

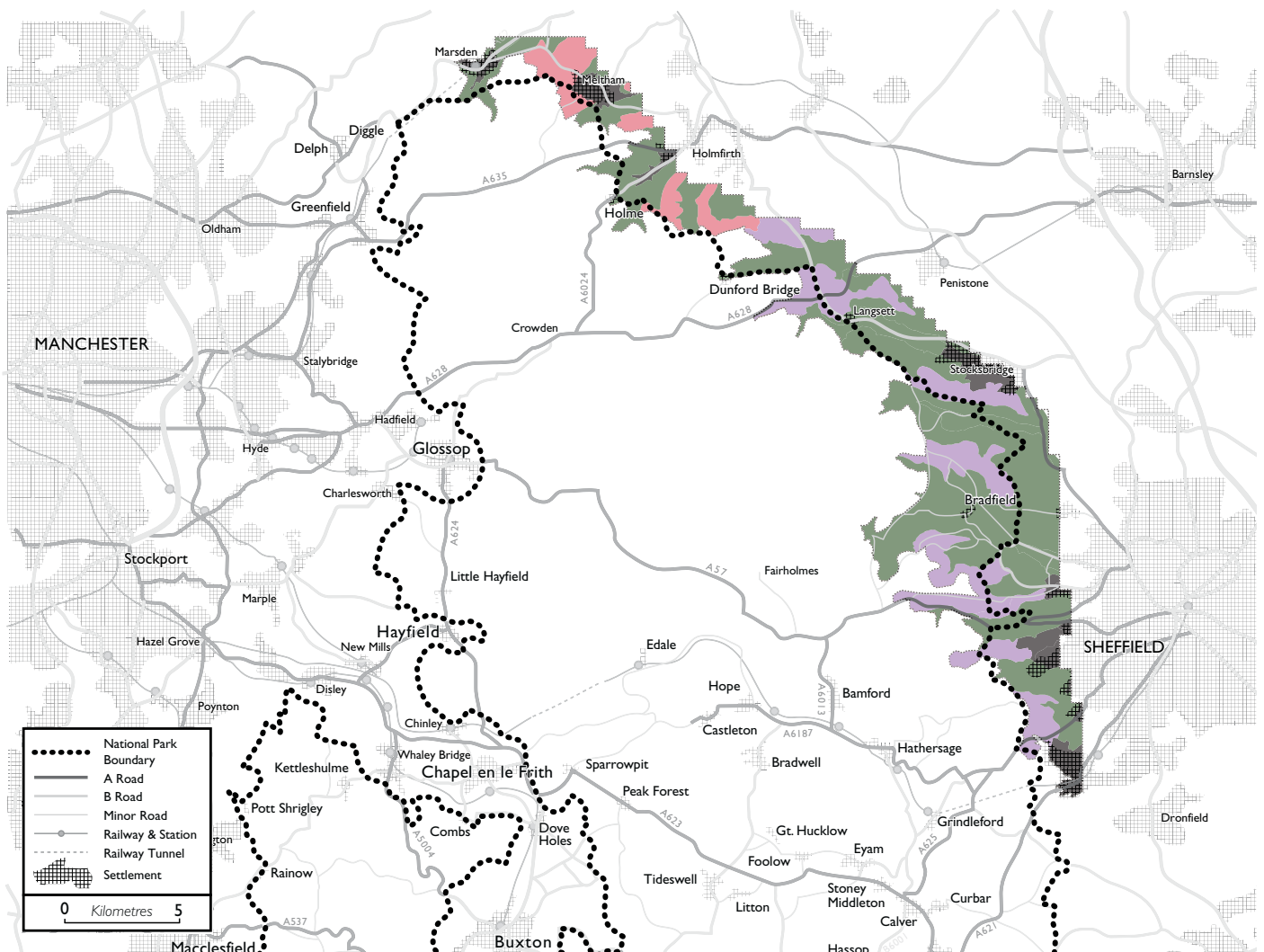
No major industry is now reliant on this landscape within the National Park and the landscape is once again mainly pastoral. The slopes tend to be a mosaic of woodland and pastoral fields. Some valleys have altered significantly with the establishment of reservoirs and plantation woodland but generally today these are also peaceful, tranquil landscapes.



Langsett reservoir © Peak District National Park Authority

The Dark Peak Yorkshire Fringe can be sub divided into a number of different landscape types, each of which is characterised by a particular aspect of the wider Dark Peak Yorkshire Fringe character. They have been defined by their broadly repeating patterns of natural elements and cultural factors:

- Enclosed Gritstone Upland
- Densely Enclosed Gritstone Upland
- Slopes & Valleys with Woodland

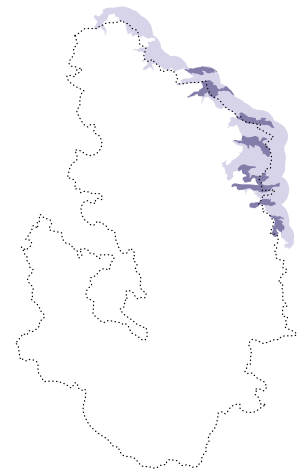


Enclosed Gritstone Upland

An enclosed upland landscape associated with high, gently undulating uplands and broad ridge summits which radiate from the Dark Peak core, sloping in places up to higher ground. This is a landscape of isolated stone farmsteads, straight roads and regular fields enclosed by drystone walls.



Enclosed Gritstone Upland on Crow Edge © Peak District National Park Authority



This landscape occurs on the edge of the moorland core, as a series of discrete areas along the eastern fringe of the Dark Peak between Penistone and Sheffield.

Key characteristics

- Rolling uplands and broad ridge summits with some steeper slopes
- Thin soils over gritstone bedrock with localised pockets of peat
- Remnant patches of rough land with bracken and gorse, some heather and bilberry
- Permanent pasture and rough grazing enclosed by gritstone walls
- Regular pattern of medium to large fields
- Straight roads with wide verges of grass and, in some places, heather
- Isolated gritstone farmsteads with stone slate roofs
- Trees grouped around farmsteads to provide shelter

Geology and landform

This landscape is associated with high, gently undulating gritstone uplands, in places rising steeply to higher open moorlands. The underlying bedrock is Millstone Grit and is often exposed as rock outcrops, particularly on the steeper slopes where it sometimes forms small gritstone edges. Towards the east there are outcrops of Coal Measures, including interbedded sandstones and shales and some seams of coal.

Soils and vegetation

The variable nature of the geology and landform give rise to a variety of soil types ranging from free draining podzols on steeper slopes to wetter, peatier soils on gentler summits. All the soils are characterised by their impoverished, acidic origin and although most of the land is now improved for pasture, many patches of semi-natural vegetation exist along verges, on steeper slopes and even as isolated patches within some fields. Heath-associated species, such as heather, bilberry and gorse are a common feature in many places. Where the soils are wetter species such as purple moor grass tend to be more common. There are some patches of soft rush on the wetter soils, which often support small populations of breeding birds such as snipe.

Tree cover

Sheep grazing, poor soils and exposure restrict tree growth so this is essentially a treeless landscape. However, there are occasional tree groups, generally adjacent to farmsteads and planted to shelter properties, using broadleaved species such as oak, ash and sycamore. There are also some shelterbelts and occasional blocks of 19th or 20th century coniferous woodland.

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 and very occasional arable fields. However, the soils are mostly of poor quality and some fields are dominated by rushes or are reverting to moorland habitats, providing habitat diversity.

Enclosure

This land was waste and commons prior to enclosure. This is a landscape with a mixture of enclosed moorland, such as on Dore Moor and Stone Moor, south of Deepcar, as well as smaller improved fields. Much of the latter is Parliamentary Enclosure, for example near Rivelin Rocks, south of Dore Moor and east of Houndkirk Moor. Most enclosure comprises regular, rectangular fields. Drystone gritstone walls are the prominent enclosing element, particularly on higher ground although in places there are hedgerows and fencing. This tends to be further towards the lower fringes of the landscape and not on higher ground.

Settlement and buildings

Settlement tends to consist of scattered isolated gritstone farmsteads with stone slate roofs often dating from the time that the landscape was enclosed. These scattered settlements are sometimes associated administratively with nearby villages and hamlets. Although isolated properties are the dominant settlement type there are some loosely-nucleated 'hamlets'. Settlement often uses the natural landform for weather protection. Along the busier roads running through the landscape there are occasionally some modern, infill developments; these tend to be in the lower lying areas.

Transport and access

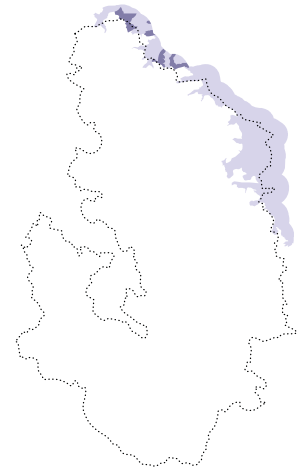
This is a remote landscape. Where roads exist they tend to be straight with even verges, laid out when the land was enclosed. In places larger, busier roads cross the landscape and these are more dominant features. Within this landscape type there are some older and now redundant packhorse routes visible as earthworks.

Densely Enclosed Gritstone Upland

An undulating upland landscape with a strong pattern of small rectangular fields. Settlement is scattered but often associated with hamlets and villages such as Meltham and Holme on lower ground. Many of the small gritstone farmsteads and cottages are associated with the former woollen industry as evidenced by the characteristic weavers' windows lighting the top floors of buildings. This is a predominantly pastoral landscape enclosed by gritstone walls, with outlying patches of remnant heather moorland.



Hade Edge © Peak District National Park Authority



Key characteristics

- High rolling hill summits
- Thin soils over gritstone bedrock
- Permanent pasture with patches of heather moorland
- A regular pattern of small rectangular fields enclosed by gritstone walls
- Scattered settlement of small gritstone farmsteads and cottages
- Open views over surrounding landscape and to adjacent hills

This landscape occurs as a single cluster of discrete areas on the edge of the moorland core, in the north eastern margin of the Peak District in the Dark Peak Yorkshire Fringe around Meltham and Holmfirth.

Geology and landform

This is an upland landscape with an undulating topography that rises to higher open moorland summits. Across much of the area, the underlying bedrock is Millstone Grit and on rising ground there are a number of deeply incised cloughs formed by fast flowing streams. Towards the east there are outcrops of Coal Measures, including interbedded sandstones and shales and some seams of coal.

Soils and vegetation

The variable nature of the geology and landform give rise to a variety of soil types ranging from free draining podzols on steeper slopes to wetter, peatier soils on gentler summits. All the soils are characterised by their impoverished, acidic nature and although most of the land is now improved or semi-improved for pasture, many patches of semi-natural vegetation still exist along verges, on steeper slopes and as isolated patches within some fields. There are some patches of soft rush on the wetter soils, which can support small populations of breeding birds such as snipe.

Tree cover

This is essentially a treeless landscape with land predominantly managed for pasture. However, there are occasional solitary trees beside field boundaries and small patches of thorn scrub on rough ground.

Land use

The main land use within this landscape is improved pasture for sheep grazing; there is some cattle grazing. This enclosed agricultural landscape exists adjacent to open moorland and in places exists close to the moorland summit. However, the soils are mostly of poor quality and some fields are dominated by rushes or are reverting to moorland habitats, providing habitat diversity.

Historically, the area supported a community based on wool textile production with sheep rearing and subsistence farming in this upland setting. The land was suited to sheep rearing and the water supply was soft making this an ideal location for early wool production, generally as a home-based industry. There are records of wool production in the 12th century. There are also some relict quarries which presumably provided stone for local use.

Enclosure

This landscape is enclosed using drystone walling to create very small fields, sometimes interspersed with small areas of enclosed moorland. This enclosure is associated with the woollen industry combined with small land intakes to enable sheep rearing and subsistence farming.

Some enclosure possibly relates to the establishment of the early wool producing communities in the uplands. Other enclosure is much later, taking place in the 19th century as Parliamentary Enclosure but is still linked with the distinctive related land uses as an element of a local dual economy of agriculture and woollen textile production.

When there was a higher density population living in the valleys than on the agricultural uplands then each moor was divided according to the number of people who had traditional grazing rights. The result of this division was many particularly small parcels of land. Some of the woollen workers probably took advantage of the newly allocated land on the uplands and created smallholdings here rather than selling on their parcels.

Settlement and buildings

There are scattered gritstone farmsteads throughout most of the landscape. Those that are adjacent to reservoirs tend to be inactive. The building form tends to be simple, built using local gritstone and either stone slate or blue slate roof tiles. Weaver's cottages are a particular local feature here with distinctive rows of long, vertical upper windows designed to maximise light for weaving. Isolated weaver's cottages tend to be associated with the earlier wool industry. As the industry grew this type of window became more common and was often incorporated into three storey terraced properties, found both on these uplands and in the valleys below. These cottages still stand as testament to the historical importance of wool production in the area.

Transport and access

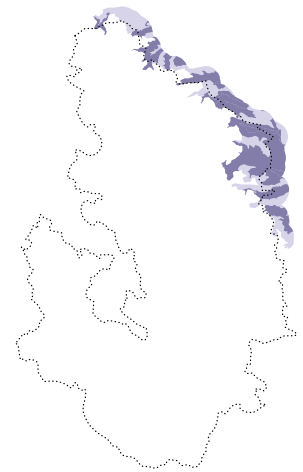
Roads generally tend to be small straight lanes running between settlements. There are some significant roads, such as the A635 along Turton's Edge. Historic inns are found relating to longer distance routes linked the communities to the markets and settlements in the lower lying areas. There are smaller roads within the landscape; some are Parliamentary Enclosure roads dating from when the landscape was enclosed from wastes and commons. Small tracks are used for access to fields and farms.

Slopes & Valleys with Woodland

A small scale but extensive pastoral landscape which is heavily wooded in places. There is a varied undulating, often steeply sloping topography. Interlocking blocks of ancient semi-natural and secondary woodland are a characteristic feature of this landscape, together with patches of acid grassland and bracken on steeper slopes.



Near Brightholmlee © Peak District National Park Authority



Key characteristics

- Steeply sloping and undulating topography
- Gritstone edges characterise the tops of some steeper slopes
- Patches of acid grassland and bracken
- Irregular blocks of ancient semi-natural and secondary woodland
- Permanent pasture in small fields enclosed by hedges and gritstone walls
- Narrow winding, often sunken lanes
- Scattered gritstone farms and loose clusters of dwellings

This landscape character type exists as a series of interlinked areas along the eastern fringe of the Peak District running from Holmfirth to south of Sheffield. It forms a natural border between the Peak District and the more densely settled landscapes to the north and east associated with Huddersfield, Barnsley and Sheffield.

Geology and landform

This is a landscape with a prominent, sloping topography lying on the edge of the gritstone moorland and sloping towards the lower lying rolling land associated with the Coal Measures geology, to the east. The underlying geology is a mixture of shales and interbedded gritstones giving rise to a dissected, undulating landform. In places the slopes are dissected by deep cloughs often containing streams established during the last ice age as the ice sheet melted. There are Coal Measures outcrops near to Penistone and Totley.

Soils and vegetation

The soils are varied, reflecting the mix of rock types, and comprise both slowly permeable, gleyed soils with localised shallow and rocky patches over shale and shallower, free draining soils with patches of impoverished land over the gritstone. There is extensive deciduous woodland cover throughout the landscape. This is often made up of ancient semi-natural woodland comprising both sessile and pedunculate oak, usually with a mixture of downy and silver birch, holly, rowan and hazel. There is often a good woodland ground flora, with species such as bluebell being widespread in some woods. Patches of acid grassland and bracken can often be found on the steeper slopes, in places associated with patches of relict dwarf shrub heath, supporting heather, bilberry and gorse. Some grasslands contain wet flushes supporting a range of damp loving species such as mosses and ferns.

Tree cover

This landscape has a strongly wooded character, defined by hillside woodlands, wooded cloughs, scattered trees along field boundaries and watercourse trees. Tree groups exist around settlements and associated with the steeply sloping topography, creating a series of framed and enclosed views throughout the landscape. There is a mixture of broadleaved semi-natural woodland and coniferous plantations. Many of the woodlands were previously utilised for white charcoal production and were often historically coppiced. 20th century plantation woodlands are often planted on slopes above reservoirs, such as around Langsett Reservoir.

Land use

This is a well wooded landscape interspersed with broad areas of pastoral agriculture: mostly a low intensity, pastoral landscape, used principally for stock rearing. As the landscape rises up to the moorland edge rough grazing tends to predominate. Pasturing is an established land use that has occurred here for a significant period of time.

This pastoral character belies an industrial past. Mining was undertaken within this landscape character type: small scale but relatively extensive coal mining was common intermittently in the hills and valleys west of Sheffield and Barnsley. Around Bradfield and west of Sheffield mining was carried out not only for coal but

also for fireclay and ganister which supported the iron and then steel industries. Gritstone quarrying was also carried out locally, particularly around Bradfield. There is evidence in the woodlands of coppicing for charcoal and white coal production, much of which presumably dates to the 17th and 18th centuries. There are reservoirs within this landscape including Langsett Reservoir, Dale Dike Reservoir, Damflask Reservoir and Rivelin Dams. The reservoirs were built from the 1830s onwards and illustrate a changing relationship to the landscape as they were built to meet the growing needs of urban settlements such as Sheffield. The reservoirs and plantations are popular destinations for recreation.

Enclosure

Enclosure within this landscape is a complex patchwork of irregular fields of unknown date, some no doubt with medieval origin but with no early maps to confirm their date, and in a similar amount 18th or 19th century enclosures, mostly brought in from patches of moorland after Parliamentary Enclosure. There is a small area of fossilised medieval strip fields a short distance to the west of Bradfield, which was once part of the village's open fields. Fields are generally enclosed by drystone walls with some mixed species and thorn hedgerows on lower slopes.

Settlement and buildings

Settlement is scattered throughout this landscape with isolated gritstone farmsteads and occasional large houses with stone slate roofs. These scattered settlements tend to lie within traditional townships which have villages such as Bradfield and Bolsterstone, and Dore, the last now subsumed within Sheffield. These were focal points for local communities and the settlement pattern was thus not dispersed in a true sense. In places there are also small clusters of farms and cottages, such as at Wigtwizzle, Midhopestones and Upper Midhope.

Transport and access

This is a generally peaceful landscape with small lanes, often sunken, providing access to settlement. There are some larger and busier roads, particularly in the east towards the nearby urban settlements. Many routes have evolved from packhorse routes. Others result from rationalisation at the time of Parliamentary Enclosure and the building of turnpike roads in the 18th and 19th centuries. Some turnpikes are today's main roads but not all proved to be successful: Mortimer Road at Penistone is a failed turnpike route.

Overall Strategy



Near Bradfield © Peak District National Park Authority

The Dark Peak Yorkshire Fringe is a pastoral landscape of valleys and slopes, enclosed fields and woodland, between the high open moors of the Dark Peak and the lower lying land to the east. This landscape is often sparsely settled, with a sense of remoteness. Cultural heritage is evidenced by the field and settlement patterns and local traditional building style. There is a need to retain and enhance these features to maintain strong landscape character in the future. This landscape provides an important recreational resource for the surrounding urban populations, particularly the series of reservoirs and surrounding plantation woodlands. This recreational use should be encouraged into the future. The transitional nature of this landscape means that good partnership working with neighbouring authorities is important.

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

Protect and manage the tranquil pastoral landscapes and the distinctive cultural character through sustainable landscape management; seek opportunities to enhance recreation opportunities, woodlands, wildness, and diversity of more remote areas.

This can be achieved by ensuring that there is:

- a sustainable land management system capable of supporting appropriate land uses whilst enhancing the network of habitats
- an approach that conserves or enhances the distinctive dispersed settlement pattern, field pattern and other cultural landscape features
- an enhanced structure and extent of woodland and tree cover in appropriate locations
- appropriate maintenance of infrastructure to enable continued public enjoyment of the landscape



Broomhead reservoir © Peak District National Park Authority

To achieve the above strategy there are particular priorities for each of the different landscape character types in the Dark Peak Yorkshire Fringe.

Enclosed Gritstone Uplands

This is a pastoral upland landscape with drystone walls, straight roads and isolated farmsteads. Agricultural improvement and grazing have reduced the ecological diversity of the pastures. The priority should be to protect the historic field pattern and conserve or restore the biodiversity of pastoral farmland. Where opportunities arise, consideration should be given to the creation of an open landscape, restoring and creating heathland.

Densely Enclosed Gritstone Uplands

Within the National Park this landscape character type comprises a small area around Meltham. This is an open settled historic landscape with a strong pattern of small and large fields enclosed by drystone walls, with scattered farmsteads and cottages. The priority should be to protect the historic field pattern and distinctive dispersed settlement pattern, whilst conserving or restoring the biodiversity of pastoral farmland and patches of semi-natural vegetation.

Slopes and Valleys with Woodland

This is a small scale pastoral landscape which is heavily wooded in places. Woodland cover varies with irregular woodland hillside blocks, woods along cloughs, around buildings and reservoirs, and scattered trees along boundaries. There are patches of acid grassland on steeper slopes. The priority is therefore to protect the mosaic and diversity of existing woodlands, boundary trees, grasslands, cultural heritage components and semi-natural habitats. Opportunities should be sought to enhance the integrity of the woodland resource by restructuring plantation woodlands and creating new woodland where appropriate.



Agden reservoir from near Bradfield © Peak District National Park Authority

Issues of change

Conservation

The Dark Peak Yorkshire Fringe is a pastoral landscape with a strong cultural heritage, particularly that associated with past industry. Some valued cultural heritage features such as drystone walls are, in places, deteriorating in condition and require efforts to conserve and maintain them, including reducing loss through theft of stones for domestic use and through vandalism. Other changes to the cultural heritage resource include the loss and deterioration of historic buildings through disuse. There has been an increase in urbanising elements in the landscape, most often associated with housing development.

In places, the semi-natural habitats associated with the landscape have deteriorated and opportunity exists to extend and restore these habitats, particularly heathland, unimproved grasslands and wet pastures.

Climate change implications

This is an upland pastoral landscape where sloping land may be affected by more extreme rainfall run off, particularly through the winter months, causing problems including downstream flooding of urban areas, erosion and habitat loss. These could lead to significant landscape character change. The uplands are more susceptible to moorland fire risks, which can be exacerbated by periods of sustained dry periods, particularly through the summer months. Climatic changes may affect the species composition of habitats, including the wet and dry clough woodlands. The area is an important water supply resource for adjacent urban areas, with most of the rivers coming off the Dark Peak moors being dammed to form a series of reservoirs. Increased water demand, water quality standards and reduced supply associated with climate change may have a significant effect on future management of the landscape for water supply. The need for less polluting energy sources could increase pressure for energy generation including wind power, solar power and hydroelectric power. This change could impact on the character, cultural heritage and biodiversity of the landscape.

Demography, housing and employment

The Dark Peak Yorkshire Fringe has a strong association with Sheffield and, consequently, it has a character that reflects the proximity of a major settlement. With the closure of much of the historic local industry, many people now commute from this area to Sheffield for work. There may be opportunities to increase local employment by developing opportunities for recreation and tourism. The demand for local affordable housing and national housing targets mean that there could be pressure to increase development in the area. This would affect the character of the landscape, both those areas within the National Park and those outside of the Park boundary. The integrity of historic buildings is, in some cases, affected by modernisation, such as the replacement of traditional windows with UPVC windows, and this can impact on landscape character. In some locations, such as the Rivelin Valley, there has been a trend for horse pasturing on small pockets of land; this is associated with changes to the agricultural character of the landscape. The location close to Sheffield also means that fly tipping is not uncommon, and although this does not generally have a permanent landscape impact, it can have an urbanising effect on the landscape character.

Tourism and recreation

Whilst the Dark Peak Yorkshire Fringe has few facilities for recreation and tourism, this is an area that is heavily used by people from adjacent urban areas and as such is highly valued. This is an important recreational transition zone between the tranquil moorland and the neighbouring urban areas. Opportunities should be sought to improve recreational facilities and opportunities within the area, without affecting the landscape character.

Farming and forestry

The landscapes in the Dark Peak Yorkshire Fringe are used mainly for permanent pasture, generally managed at a moderate level of intensity. Occasional patches of rougher ground survive in places. The historic field pattern is largely intact but many of the drystone walls that define the pattern are in poor condition. In localised areas around the urban fringes, in particular the Rivelin Valley, there has been a move from agricultural production to the use of land for horse pasture. Agricultural improvement, including the ploughing of semi-natural areas and the spreading of paper pulp, has resulted in loss and decline of unimproved grasslands and wetlands.

Small woods are a characteristic feature of the Dark Peak Yorkshire Fringe, particularly in the Slopes and Valleys with Woodland. Much of the woodland is of ancient origin with more recent secondary woodland, and in places there are larger blocks of plantation woodlands, mainly on reservoir slopes. Many of these woods are threatened by neglect, and opportunities should be sought to bring them under management.

Minerals and resources

There is an active permission for a ganister quarry within the Dark Peak Yorkshire Fringe. Opportunity should be sought to minimise any adverse effects of the single quarry site.

This is an important water supply area for adjacent urban areas, with most of the rivers coming off the Dark Peak moors being dammed to form a series of reservoirs.

Energy and infrastructure

There is an increasing national demand for renewable energy, particularly wind power. In addition there is increasing potential for solar and water power, and other renewable energy sources. The impact of inappropriate wind generation projects could adversely impact on historic landscape character and on the setting of historic landscape features, amenity value and tranquility. There is a visual impact of existing infrastructure associated with power supply, e.g. overhead electricity cables. There are opportunities for the development of local hydropower schemes, to plant native woodlands and improve woodland management linked to local wood fuel production and usage. These could help reduce reliance on traditional carbon-based energies.

High levels of vehicular use are increasing damage to roads, walls, hedges and verges, creating an increased demand for parking, particularly in Bradfield.

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



Mast near Bradfield © Peak District National Park Authority

Landscape guidelines

Dark Peak Yorkshire Fringe

Enclosed Gritstone Uplands	Densely Enclosed Gritstone Uplands	Slopes and Valleys with Woodland
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Protect

Protect and maintain historic dry stone walls	●	●	◐
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Manage

Manage and enhance woodlands	○	○	●
Manage and enhance plantation woodlands	○	○	◐
Manage and enhance the diversity of agricultural grasslands	●	●	◐
Manage the built environment to enhance landscape character	○	○	○
Manage historic mineral landscapes	○	○	○
Manage the network of tracks and footpaths to maximise opportunities to enjoy the landscape	◐	◐	◐
Manage the network of minor roads to maintain character and local access	◐	◐	◐
Manage and enhance clough woodlands	○	○	◐
Manage and enhance areas of heath/moor	◐	○	○

Plan

Create new native broadleaved woodland	○	○	●
Create clough woodlands	○	○	◐
Create, extend and link areas of heath/moor	◐	○	○
Develop small-scale renewable energy for local needs	○	○	◐
Develop appropriate landscapes from mineral workings	○	○	○

- 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 and maintain historic drystone walls

Drystone walls are an important historical feature in the more upland landscapes in the Dark Peak Yorkshire Fringe, e.g. the Enclosed and Densely Enclosed Gritstone Uplands. In places, the management of walls is declining and there is a need to enhance their management in order to conserve and retain the cherished historic field pattern.

Manage

Manage and enhance woodlands

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

Manage and enhance plantation woodlands

Coniferous plantation woodlands form significant landscape features, particularly around the reservoirs within the Slopes and Valleys with Woodlands. Opportunities should be sought to integrate them into the wider historic landscape through improved management using methods such as felling and replacement with appropriate native tree species, whilst conserving cultural heritage features.

Manage and 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, mainly in the Enclosed Gritstone Upland.

Manage the built environment to enhance landscape character

The scattered settlement pattern of farmsteads and houses lying within traditional townships and villages is a unique feature of the Dark Peak Yorkshire Fringe landscapes. New development should respond positively to the historic settlement pattern, local materials and building traditions. Opportunities should be sought to influence potential future development that lies outside but has an impact on the National Park, considering siting, layout, design and materials. 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 historic mineral landscapes

Characteristic features are the historic quarries which provided local building stone within the Densely Enclosed Gritstone Upland landscape type. Within the Slopes and Valleys with Woodland there are the remains of coal mining, ganister, fireclay and gritstone quarries. Landscapes associated with historic mineral extraction should be retained and managed, including, where appropriate, providing interpretation of their history.

Manage the network of tracks and footpaths to maximise opportunities to enjoy the landscape

The network of tracks and footpaths should be managed to enhance capacity for providing healthy recreation and enjoyment of the landscape for a wide range of users. This can be easily achieved through landscape management measures such as surfacing, signage, and by controlling inappropriate uses to retain the character, cultural heritage and biodiversity values.

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 clough woodlands

In some areas clough woods are important landscape features as well as being important habitats. Opportunities should be sought to enhance the management of these woods, preferably by natural regeneration, without affecting cultural heritage features, historic landscapes and existing ecological features.

Manage and enhance areas of heath/moor

Areas that have been enclosed from former historic moors have, in places, remnant patches of moorland habitat. Opportunities should be sought to manage and enhance areas of existing patches of moor and heath in the Enclosed Gritstone Uplands, enhancing habitat and biodiversity potential.

Plan

Create new native broadleaved woodland

There are opportunities to extend woodland cover without affecting cultural heritage features and historic landscapes in the Slopes and Valleys with Woodland. There are opportunities to extend woodland by natural regeneration, although a balance will need to be reached between woodland expansion and the retention of acid grassland. Increased woodland cover creates areas of shelter and shade which may be useful for mitigating the impacts of climate change; on slopes it also reduces water flow and can reduce flood damage to lower lying landscapes.

Create clough woods

Opportunities should be sought to extend and create clough woodlands within the Moorland Slopes and Cloughs, preferably by natural regeneration, without affecting cultural heritage features, historic landscapes and existing ecological features. In wet cloughs, increasing woodland cover can lead to slower water flow at times of heavy rainfall and thus help to reduce flood risks in lower lying landscapes.

Create, extend and link areas of heath/moor

There are opportunities within the Enclosed Gritstone Uplands of the Dark Peak Yorkshire Fringe to diversify the existing grassland based landscapes. This can be achieved by creating new moorland/heath and extending and linking existing patches of moor/heath, enhancing moorland landscapes.

Develop small-scale renewable energy for local needs

The Slopes and Valleys with Woodland are particularly suitable for the development of water power and local wood fuel supplies. Opportunities should be sought to develop small hydroelectric schemes and manage woodland to increase local renewable energy supply, thus reducing reliance on traditional carbon-based energies, 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.

Develop appropriate landscapes from mineral workings

Modern mineral workings should be restored to maximise visual amenity, biodiversity, recreational, educational and heritage value. The aim should be to use the land to create semi-natural landscapes, which blend into the surrounding landscape.



Crops near Bradfield © Peak District National Park Authority

Peak District National Park Authority

Aldern House
Baslow Road
Bakewell
Derbyshire
DE45 1AE

