

Issue 22 March 2011

Welcome to the new Countryside Volunteers' 'update' – a change in style, but hopefully no less interesting for that.

### COUNTRYSIDE VOLUNTEERS' ANNUAL MEETINGS

In January & February three meetings were held in Appleton-le-Street, Blubberhouses and Bedale, and were attended by over 60 Countryside Volunteers and 13 Countryside Service staff.

Most people who came also enjoyed a short walk in the vicinity beforehand, led by friendly, knowledgeable staff.

Following a buffet lunch, each meeting heard a round-up of 2010, summarising what volunteers accomplished during the year - this showed not only an impressive amount but also the diversity of voluntary work undertaken in the county.

Those present also discussed a variety of topics relating to volunteering with the countryside service. Ideas and opinions of Countryside Volunteers are valued and taken into account wherever possible, so this was a useful forum in which many ideas were expressed and shared.

Subjects discussed were:- the attractions of volunteering in the countryside, mileage expenses, quality of volunteer management & recruitment of new volunteers.

Each subject was given a thorough airing and many of the views and conclusions were common to all three meetings. A strong thread that emerged from all was a shared passion for the countryside and a willingness to help the Countryside Service as much as possible.

If you would like a copy of the summary report on the discussions, please contact David Ranner.

Walkers near Appleton-le-Street, led by Steve Green.



What Steve & Mr Merchant are pointing at is unknown.

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### REPARATION

Countryside Service and the county council's Youth Justice Service have recently been working together. In the last few months Countryside Volunteers have been joined on selected Natural Environment tasks by young people on a reparation scheme. This is to enable young people to make up for what they have done by helping them to give something back either directly to their victim or indirectly to the local community. It also gives them the chance to do something positive, hopefully giving them new skills and confidence.

The lads, with their minders, have helped on tasks where many hands were needed. So far this has proved to be a very worthwhile partnership venture. We have benefitted by getting more work done – work which is well suited to young, fit and energetic people, as well as to the older, fit and energetic!

The minders report that from their point of view this has been of incalculable value. 'Seeing people working hard and enjoying it (without being paid), promotes a real respect for others and spurs the lads on, instilling a workmanlike attitude in them. And it gives them something to think about given that usually, if not made to do something, they do nothing, which leads to boredom & mischief. Promoting work, paid or not, is massively important in reducing offending. The interaction with volunteers during breaks also gives the lads a view of other parts of the community, whilst to do something useful themselves and enjoy doing it, is a real eye opener for them.'

So we hope to continue with the arrangement. Not every task or site will be suitable for such mixed work, as some volunteers may be deterred from doing joint tasks. But it is something which produces many benefits and volunteers can feel satisfied that their example can have a really positive effect on youngsters who have been in trouble.

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**FIRST AID TRAINING**

1<sup>st</sup> aid skills are useful to have and all Countryside Volunteers are encouraged to do some 1<sup>st</sup> aid training. Many volunteers have done a day's basic training and for some their certificate needs to be renewed. A one-day 1<sup>st</sup> aid course is now planned for Saturday, 7<sup>th</sup> May.

1<sup>st</sup> aid training is a must if you patrol open access land and if you use a strimmer. Please check the date on your certificate.

If you want to attend this one-day emergency aid course, please say on the Reply Form, or phone or email – by 8th April if possible please. Numbers will be limited, so it will be first come, first served.

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**NATURAL ENVIRONMENT TASKS**

Following a very busy winter programme of conservation management tasks, the next month or so will be relatively sparse. During bird-nesting season there is very little practical work that can be done, however, by the end of June the himalayan balsam will be back!.

Below is the programme for the next quarter – April to June 2011. Not all the sites have been decided yet, but if you can put any dates in your diary, let us know on the Reply Form or by email or phone, and you'll get more details nearer the time.

<b>When</b>	<b>Where</b>	<b>What</b>
Sunday 27 <sup>th</sup> March	Yearsley Moor, Howardian Hills	Rhododenron clearance
Sunday 8 <sup>th</sup> May	Howardian Hills AONB	TBC
Tuesday 14 <sup>th</sup> June	Beningbrough Hall riverbank, north of York	Himalayan balsam control
Wednesday 15 <sup>th</sup> June	TBC	Balsam management
Wednesday 22 <sup>nd</sup> June	Landmoth Wood SINC, nr Northallerton	Balsam bashing
Tuesday 28 <sup>th</sup> June	Cawood Borrow Pits, nr Selby	Balsam removal & bramble control
Thursday 30 <sup>th</sup> June	Patefield wood SINC, south of Tadcaster	Balsam clearance
Sunday 17 <sup>th</sup> July	Howardian Hills AONB	TBC

More tasks may be added to this programme. If you've expressed an interest in NE practical tasks you will be informed of extra tasks for your area(s) as details are finalised.

To help with planning, *please tell us if you intend to go*, and if you then have to change plans please *let us know*. On most tasks any number of volunteers are welcome, but on some sites there needs to be a limit, so don't just turn up without checking first - make sure that we know you want to come.

Whenever there are too many names down, volunteers will always be selected in a fair and even-handed way.

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**NIDDERDALE’S TRADITIONAL FARM BUILDINGS – VOLUNTEER SURVEYORS WANTED**

A new project is being planned to record all the old farm buildings in Nidderdale AONB. Sally Childes, the AONB’s Heritage Officer based in Pateley Bridge, is looking for volunteers to help with surveying traditional buildings, including those in farmsteads and out in the wider landscape.

All necessary training will be given by an expert consultant. If you are interested in helping or want to find out more, there is an open meeting to explain what’s involved arranged for Monday, 4<sup>th</sup> April, at Pateley Bridge, starting at 6:30 pm.

If you plan to go to this meeting, please contact Dave Ranner, or [sally.childes@harrogate.gov.uk](mailto:sally.childes@harrogate.gov.uk)  
Or tick the Reply Form

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**NATURE CONSERVATION VOLUNTEERING IN NORTH YORKSHIRE. WHY IT IS IMPORTANT.**

**Countryside Volunteers** make a vital contribution to our work in helping conserve our important wildlife habitats through their hard work on Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCs).

**Last year over 2 dozen** volunteers helped with our work, undertaking surveys recording and monitoring species and carrying out practical habitat management. These tasks range from removing invasive plant species and meadow cutting in summer, to scrub and pond clearance in autumn and winter. Between them volunteers gave over 400 days of their spare time, helping to conserve threatened habitats and species. We really value the time volunteers give to help in this way and their hard work makes a real difference to our local environment.

**What are SINCs?** SINCs are local sites which are important for the conservation of wildlife. They may support threatened habitats, such as chalk grassland, hay meadows or ancient woodland, or may be important for the wild plants or animals which are present.

In North Yorkshire, there are over 700 SINC’s. They are found on both public and private land and range in size from small ponds and churchyards, to larger areas of habitat such wetland sites. They also include linear sites such as roadside verges, canals and rivers.

**Why are SINCs important?** SINCs support both locally and nationally threatened wildlife, and many sites will contain habitats and species that are priorities under local or UK Biodiversity Action Plans (BAPs), which set out strategies for the conservation of much of our most vulnerable wildlife.

SINCs complement statutorily protected sites such as Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) and nature reserves by helping to maintain links between these sites. In recent years there has been a growing recognition of the importance of conserving such places, so that wildlife can survive in the wider countryside.

They also make a vital contribution to the quality of life and the well being of the community and support research and education. Sites with public access have an important role in contributing to the public enjoyment of nature conservation.

**SINCs are under threats** Wildlife habitats and species are in decline across the country and the wildlife value of many of our SINC sites is declining and in some cases has been lost altogether. The causes range from neglect, inappropriate management, to pollution and development, intensive agricultural practices, vandalism and recreational pressure.

The extent of damage and loss is worrying. If allowed to continue some of our most valuable wildlife and wild places will be lost forever. We need to ensure this decline is halted by working in partnership with landowners in securing appropriate management of SINC sites. This includes offering practical support such as arranging for Countryside Volunteers to undertake important management work.

Whether in public or private ownership, SINCs are vitally important if we are to maintain a countryside that is rich in wildlife, and your help in conserving these sites will continue to be needed if we are to achieve this.

Thank you! *David Cole & Louise Moss, ecologists*



Some SINC's are not as dry as others. With undiminished enthusiasm, Countryside Volunteers, with Ranger Catherine Smith, clear the pond at Moor End Meadow SINC, Staveley near Knaresborough

*If you have not registered an interest in Natural Environment work but would like to help, please get in touch with the Volunteers Coordinator.*

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**SEASONAL MONITORING OF PUBLIC RIGHTS OF WAY**

**Ploughing & Cropping checks** Twice a year rights of way officer Peter Penny rallies volunteers to help with checking if paths across arable fields have been properly reinstated after cultivation. Farmers can sometimes overlook the requirement to mark the line of rights of way, but some more than others tend to forget each time and they receive reminders of this legal duty. A follow-up ground visit is then necessary, but as there are around 120 sites to check, help from Countryside Volunteers saves a great deal of staff time.

This spring we will ask for volunteers to carry out P&C ground checks during the period 9<sup>th</sup> to 22<sup>nd</sup> May.

**Seasonal Upgrowth Management Project (SUMP)** Each year approximately 250 kilometres of rights of way are cleared of seasonal upgrowth by contractors, usually twice, sometimes three times during the season. Peter Penny needs to keep a check on the quality of strimming, to make sure the paths are okay to use. A wide selection of paths have to be checked but this can only be done with the help of Countryside Volunteers.

SUMP volunteers will be asked to check particular paths or bridleways between certain dates through the growing season.

If you have registered an interest in rights of way surveying & monitoring (RW / SM), or have done P&C or SUMP checks before, you may be asked to help this time. If you haven't but want to help, please let us know (on the Reply Form, or phone up or email).

Thank you. *Peter Penny*

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**VOLUNTEERING IN THE HOWARDIAN HILLS AONB**

Volunteers have helped us out with four weekend tasks over the past few months.

On Sundays in October and January volunteers spent the day clearing rhododendron at Yearsley Moor to improve the heathland flora under the tree canopy. The work is part of a long-term project working with the Forestry Commission to clear the rhododendron from the plantation using both machinery and volunteers. It is hoped that clearing the area of this invasive plant will encourage the spread of heathland flora which already exists in small pockets.

In November and February the group's efforts switched to Grimston Moor, once again aiming to restore the heathland ground flora. Here they removed western hemlock from the plantation. Western hemlock is the most prolific of the conifer species at seeding under a canopy layer. By removing these young plants and harvesting the bigger ones over the next few years, before they reach a mature enough status to seed, it is intended that their seeding cycle will be broken and the species will be eradicated from the site.

Return visits are planned to Yearsley on Sunday 13<sup>th</sup> March and Sunday 27<sup>th</sup> March – let us know if you want to help, *if you haven't said already*.



The team, after a rhododendron clearing day at Yearsley Moor

Tasks dates in the Howardian Hills have also been put in the diary for Sunday 8<sup>th</sup> May and Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> July – what we will be doing on these dates is yet to be confirmed - if you register your interest with Dave Ranner (via REPLY Form, email or phone) we'll let you know more details closer to the time.

*Liz Bassindale, AONB Officer*

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**DALE EDGE, NIDDERDALE**

Open Access patrollers will be interested to learn about the resolution of an issue regarding a public right of way in upper Nidderdale. This route runs east-north-east from the north end of Scar House dam as a bridleway and then along Dale Edge to 110767. At this point it turns east as a public path down the track to Pot Moor High Road at 136772.

There was a claim that this should be a Byway Open to All Traffic (BOAT). However, this claim no longer stands so the route remains a bridleway & path only and 4x4s or motor bikes can no longer legally use it. Signs to this effect may be erected in due course.

Using your discretion you should politely point out the situation to any 4x4s or motor bikes and report any evidence or sightings of illegal use.

A similar situation regarding In Moor Lane between Middlesmoor and Scar remains to be determined, so 4x4s or motor bikes may be within their rights to use it.

If you are uncertain about the status of any route and who may or may not use it, please contact Dave Ranner. And please remember that, as OA patrollers, unless you are on access land your route should keep to public rights of way.

## CO-ORDINATOR'S ITEMS

**Sharing cars** Volunteers are asked to share cars wherever practical to get to volunteer activities and to encourage this you can claim for carrying passengers (currently 10 pence a mile). Many already do share, but don't always know who else is in the 'pool' or what their numbers are.

If you are willing to share cars and are happy for your name to be added to the car-sharing list, please let us know via the Reply Form (or by phone or email)

**Emailing** When we ask for volunteers for tasks, etc., or send out details, most people are contacted by email (although those without email are not forgotten). Some people ask us not to reveal their email addresses, so volunteers usually receive a blind copy (BC). But if 'carbon copies' (CC) were sent, everyone then has a way of seeing who else may be going to contact them for sharing lifts.

It is proposed that we CC to everyone *unless you tell us that this isn't acceptable to you*. If you want to remain on the BC list that's absolutely fine - *please tell Dave Ranner* via the Reply Form, phone or email.

**Passenger rate** Please note: the passenger rate is payable to help cut down on separate journeys, so it isn't really meant for volunteer passengers who live at the same address.

### Diary/Claim form

Do not leave a Diary/Claim form too long before sending it in. You may submit a claim as soon as you want, but you are asked to send in after no more than 3 months maximum.

## SELECTED COUNTRYSIDE SERVICE STAFF PHONE NUMBERS

David Ranner - Volunteers Officer	01609 532435	07976 946355
Liz Bassindale - Howardian Hills AONB Officer	0845 034 9495	07773 343502
Aidan Rayner - PRoW team leader	01609 533077	07715 747297
Peter Penny - PRoW officer, Northallerton	01609 536035	07976 985650
Iain Burgess - PRoW officer, Skipton	01609 532894	07525 248488
Brian Mullins - PRoW officer, Kirby Misperton	01609 533758	07808 058725
Matt Millington - Biodiversity Officer	01609 533240	07816 273935
Louise Moss - Ecologist (Monday - Wed)	01609 532376	07949 265447
David Cole - Ecologist (Thurs - Friday)	01609 532452	
<i>Countryside Rangers:-</i>		
Andrew Hall	07976 985656	07976 985656
Ben Jackson	07814 490520	01609 533504
Andy Brown	07814 490512	01609 535977
Steve Green	07814 490515	01609 533759
David Ottaway	07715 747293	01609 534086
Nicky Bunting	07967 357297	01609 534257
Mike Gurney	07808 058735	01609 534255
Catherine Smith	07967 309259	01609 798814
Gary Atkinson	07753 933297	08453 669505

## Caption competition



Thank you to everyone who entered the cartoon caption competition in the last issue.

The 15 entries, which included some very witty & imaginative ideas, were judged anonymously by countryside service staff. Mike Barney's caption was judged the winner

*"The hell with the expenses claim, lets take the pretty route"*

If you want a copy of this Volunteers' Update in larger print just ask Dave Ranner.

**COUNTRYSIDE VOLUNTEERS REPLY FORM**  
**Volunteer activities April, May & June 2011**

**Name .....**

Please tick boxes as appropriate and return as soon as possible. Thanks.

<b>Practical conservation tasks</b>			✓
Sunday 27 <sup>th</sup> March	Yearsley Moor, Howardian Hills	Rhododenron clearance	
Sunday 8 <sup>th</sup> May	Howardian Hills AONB	TBC	
Tues 14 <sup>th</sup> June	Beningbrough Hall riverbank	Himalayan balsam removal	
Wed 15 <sup>th</sup> June	TBC	Himalayan balsam	
Wed 22 <sup>nd</sup> June	Landmoth Wood SINC	Himalayan balsam	
Tues 28 <sup>th</sup> June	Cawood Borrow Pits	Himalayan balsam and bramble control	
Thurs 30 <sup>th</sup> June	Patefield wood SINC - TBC	Balsam removal	
Sunday 17 <sup>th</sup> July	Howardian Hills AONB	TBC	
<b>Nidderdale Farm Building Project</b>	I plan to attend the open evening on Monday, 4 <sup>th</sup> April		
<b>1<sup>st</sup> Aid training</b>	I would like to attend this training course on Saturday, 7 <sup>th</sup> May		
<b>Ploughing &amp; Cropping checks</b>	Please add my name to the list for P&C checking		
<b>SUMP checks</b>	Please add my name to the list for SUMP checks (if you haven't volunteered for this already)		
<b>Car sharing</b>	Please add my name to the car-sharing pool		
<b>Email contact</b>	I do not want my email address broadcast. Please only send 'blind copy' (BC) emails to me		

Please send to: [countryside.volunteers@northyorks.gov.uk](mailto:countryside.volunteers@northyorks.gov.uk)  
 Or post to David Ranner, Volunteers Officer,  
 Waste & Countryside Service, BES, NYCC, County Hall,  
**FREEPOST, DL358,**  
 Northallerton, DL7 8BR