

NORTH PENNINES AONB GEOPARK

Activity Report, September - April 2007

Work continues to further establish the North Pennines AONB as a European Geopark. Some of the recent activities include:

1. 'Northern Rocks – the North Pennines Festival of Geology and Landscape 2008' (European Geoparks Week). A programme for the 2008 festival has been developed, with 35 events included in the 16 page promotional brochure. Our other programme of events for the area includes a further 8 geological walks / activities.
2. We delivered a programme of 10 evening classes on local geology, in September and October. 30 people attended the weekly classes and provided very positive feedback.
3. Work has continued on site based interpretation. New leaflets for the Frosterley Marble and the Stanhope Fossil Tree have been produced. Work funded and supported by the team continues at Killhope, the North of England Lead Mining Museum and at Nenthead Mines Heritage Centre (where we are funding and advising on new touch screen interpretation and new geological trail).
4. 8 new geological trails are in production.
5. Elizabeth is continuing to work on a 60 page book on the geology of the North Pennines.
6. Work has continued on our major peatland conservation project (Peatscapes) in the Geopark. The quaternary geology of the Geopark is of international importance and our two Peatscapes staff have been mainly engaged in managing contracts for blocking draining grips on the moors (190km this winter).
7. Other project work includes the further development of our major drystone walling traineeships project and our ground breaking hay meadow conservation project, both helping to conserve important aspects of the Geopark landscape. New publications include further walks leaflets and training events, and more work on our new management plan. Our new £3.1million conservation and interpretation project, Living North Pennines, is now underway, with six new staff having joined the team. This is not geologically focussed, though some of the work arising out of the 'community interpretation' strand is likely to involve Elizabeth in supporting geological interpretation by local people; two of the four historic buildings which will be conserved are part of the area's lead mining past.

Activity for the network

8. We produced the compendium of Geoparks reports for the Beigua meeting.
9. Chris and Elizabeth supported Nikoloas in developing the Network's IVc bid and have been working on a VIb NW Europe bid with other partner Geoparks.
10. Chris gave a presentation on geotourism to a seminar in Lochaber Geopark.

Chris Woodley-Stewart, Dr Elizabeth Pickett, February 2008
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