



Coldberry



Middlehope Shield Washing
Floor



White's Level, Middlehope



Whitesyke's Dressing Floor

OREsome North Pennines Project Evaluation

Final version 29 October 2018

Evaluation carried out by Simon Lees

www.countrysidepartnership.co.uk

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OREsome North Pennines Project Evaluation

Researching and conserving the archaeology, geology and ecology of mining landscapes

Introduction and context

OREsome North Pennines was a two-and-a-half-year project from April 2016 to October 2018 that aimed to better understand and improve the management of eight 'at-risk' structures relating to the North Pennines mining heritage. The sites are all classified Scheduled Monuments by Historic England. The actual completion date was extended by six months to accommodate a delay in the project officer commencing and completion of the interpretation programme.

The project was supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund and has trained volunteers to survey and monitor the archaeological, ecological and geological interest on an annual basis, so that any management problems can be detected before they become critical.

A unique feature of the project was to provide an opportunity to look at these sites in an integrated way, so that any future management of the sites will have due regard to archaeological, ecological and geological features.

In addition to survey and monitoring, the project explored prehistoric and Roman mining activity in the North Pennines. A small dissemination programme of events and interpretation material, was conducted, so that the findings of the project can be shared as widely as possible.

This report is the outcome from a short external evaluation and provides:

- A summary of the key achievements and challenges as identified within a small focus group meeting
- An overview of the actual outputs achieved compared to the original HLF application
- The views and comments from the volunteers who contributed to the project and collected from an online survey

1. What has worked well?

1.1 ~ Increased understanding and learning about the mined landscape of the North Pennines

The main headline to emerge from the OREsome North Pennines project is the success of the volunteer groups who have contributed to researching the archaeology, geology and ecology of the mining landscapes of the North Pennines, exceeding the expectations of what was originally envisaged at the time of the application to the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) in September 2015.

Throughout the project the volunteers have completed the paperwork and produced some special research, that has enabled the volunteers to become the local "experts", building a greater understanding of their local sites than the archaeologists brought in to facilitate the work.

The intention of bringing together a wide suite of requirements and specialisms to look at the complex archaeology, ecology and geology of the mined landscapes has enabled collective thinking to come together that has increased understanding and learning about the sites than at the start of the project.

2 examples that illustrate an increased understanding and learning include:

- **At Coldberry** ~ the confirmation of a natural feature that was previously thought to have been a Hush¹
- **At Pike Law** ~ the volunteers have highlighted some unexplained peri glacial deposits, which provides additional information to surveys that have been previously carried out and warrants further research

1.2 ~ Developing an integrated approach

By adopting an integrated approach to undertaking the research it is felt that the OREsome North Pennines project has helped to:

- Amass a wealth of research information that has been packaged and brought together in the form of site reports and geo referenced site condition information
- Broaden the minds of volunteers, specialists and agency staff that has led to a sharing of information
- Influence external agencies with the research helping to inform management decision and decide priorities. The Environment Agency has used OREsome survey information to help mitigate their impacts on features of interest when undertaking engineering works at Whitesike.
- Empower and build confidence within the volunteers, giving them a direct link to the relevant authorities to enable the appropriate action to be undertaken
- Bringing together the volunteers to get to know each other and share experiences at the OREsome 8 volunteer event
- Manage volunteer expectations of what can and cannot be achieved through the projects' outputs. Receiving and understanding the message that recoding decline in a historic landscape asset is as valuable as maintaining and improving condition given the restriction in resources for undertaking restoration work

¹ A hush is a gully or ravine excavated at least in part by use of a controlled torrent of water, to reveal or exploit a vein of lead or other mineral ore.

2. What have been some of the challenges encountered?

2.1 ~ The unrealistic timescale and resource allocated for project management

Allocation of the equivalent of 2 days per week for development, co-ordination and management of the project was too little to sort all of the activities required throughout the delivery phase. At the start of the project there was the need to recruit volunteers, consultants, draw up and define survey methodology, complete monitoring methodology arrange training, manage overall expectations and get everything going.

"In the first 10 months (from when I was in post) it was impossible to comprehensively set up the project and have all the steps in place so that the volunteers had a clear view of when things would happen and what the final output would look like. The final four months outputs will be also be very challenging to fit into 2 days a week."

Although the training was undertaken by consultants, it was time heavy for me because I organised and attended almost all of the events, for continuity. For a similar project in the future I would recommend 3 days a week Project Officer time, with a timetable that allows for planning before recruitment of the volunteers."

Project Officer reflection ~ May 2018

Throughout the delivery there has been the need to ensure that fieldwork, site surveys and monitoring has remained on track which has meant that the celebratory elements such as; completion of the three heritage trails with associated interpretation, the events programme of guided walks, presentation and workshops as well as an exhibition of key findings have all been delayed and have been delivered as part of the project extension to October 2018.

"The reason for all these activities being at the back end of the project is that they require the survey information to have been gathered by the volunteers, and this process took a lot longer than originally planned."

Project Officer reflection ~ May 2018

This integration and support provided to volunteers has not worked as well. A consequence of limited Project Officer capacity to facilitate and enable activity has been a reduced amount of time available to connect, support and just to get to know the volunteers which may account for (some of) the drop off in volunteer numbers. The volunteer groups that did the best were the ones where lead volunteers took on responsibility for organising some of the survey work. In addition, when the archaeology, geology and ecology experts got together with the volunteers, the experiences and offers from the volunteers were not often heard.

It is recognised by the North Pennines team that it will be important for the final reporting to capture all the knowledge of the volunteers, as they have been the constant "thread" throughout the project. Additional resource to facilitate and mitigate these above issues would have been welcomed.

Other challenges and learning noted from the project included:

2.2 ~ Weather impacting on project delivery ~ Delivery of the project started in Autumn 2016 which meant that site training took place in difficult weather conditions. As well as presenting challenges for motivating and retaining volunteers, the survey recording sheets were found to be unsuitable.

“Perhaps the volunteers could have been provided with ‘weather writers’, but in general I would say that the volunteers organised themselves to undertake survey work to avoid the worst of the weather. This, coupled with volunteers differing availability, made the process take longer.”

Project Officer observation ~ May 2018

2.3 ~ Historic England engagement ~ With hindsight, Historic England felt they should have engaged with the volunteer groups sooner having seen the results being delivered by the survey and monitoring work.

2.4 ~ Investigation of early mining sites ~ To achieve the agreed outputs the following activities were completed:

- Durham University Archaeological Services working with the volunteers to undertake a geophysical survey at Slit Wood
- A site visit and capturing drone footage of inaccessible sites on Cross Fell

“The Slitt Wood survey met the needs of the application. At Cashwell/Cornriggs, on Cross Fell, the drone survey, undertaken by volunteers, failed to show any encouraging signs for further survey work. So, although I failed to spend most of my budget on this, we did undertake investigation of two potential early mining sites.”

Project Officer observation ~ May 2018

2.5 ~ Consultants approach to surveying ~ The difference between recording archaeology and monitoring condition needs to be noted and led to lots of paperwork for the volunteers to complete. This work was generated by following an example provided in the draft project manual as part of the original HLF bid.

In hindsight, Historic England felt that it would have been helpful to spend more time designing the survey methodology so that the volunteers had a simpler recording form. However, now that the volunteers have spent so long undertaking very detailed recording this does provide a fantastic baseline of information.

2.6 ~ Retaining volunteers ~ As identified in a couple of areas above, retaining volunteers throughout the process was a challenge with a number of interlinked factors. Some of the problems were common with all volunteer projects such as personal circumstances changing or not having sufficient time to devote to the programme. Other factors such as; the time available to support volunteers, the training programme at a difficult time of the year and the paperwork involved in the survey work were all in the control of the project and the learning should be noted for similar heritage projects in the future.

3. What have been the key outputs for OREsome North Pennines?

“Volunteers contributed added value of £100K to OREsome North Pennines”

...using 650 volunteer days and HLF volunteer figures of £150/day

The actual achievements of the OREsome North Pennines project compared to the original application, along with explanatory notes, can be summed up in the following table:

Output	Application	Actual
Integrated archaeological, ecological and geological surveys of eight Scheduled Ancient Monuments	8	8
Annual monitoring of the eight landscapes, providing condition reports to Historic England	8	8
Notes on the above: The initial surveying of the sites took the volunteers a long time. A condition assessment has been completed for each site, as part of the survey. Annual monitoring of the sites will be achieved through the newly established 'mine group'. It is recommended that geological and botanical monitoring occur every 5 years.		
Complete archaeological investigation of two early mining sites	2	2
Notes on the above: Investigations occurred at two sites: 1) Walkover and drone survey (by volunteers) of Cashwell Hush. 2) A geophysical survey at Slitt Wood, where volunteers were trained to use geophysical equipment. Neither survey ended in an 'archaeological dig' because insufficient evidence was found.		
All results in accessible form on a specific section of the AONB website	1	1
Notes on the above: All being finalised. Will be on the OREsome North Pennines page of the AONB website by the end of October 2018.		
Events programme for members of the public delivered, guided walks, presentations and workshops	not quantified	5
Members of the public attending the events programme	not quantified	45
Setting up mining related heritage trails offering geological, archaeological and ecological interpretation	3	7
Notes on the above: Interpretation Plan recommends the creation of nine pieces of interpretation to include self guided trails and geo cache for all surveyed sites along with one overarching leaflet to cover the OREsome North Pennines project, with digital links. To be completed by the end of October 2018.		
Temporary exhibition at Bowlees Visitor Centre by the end of October 2018	1	1
Creating a specific area of the North Pennines AONB website dedicated to the OREsome project	1	1
Notes on the above: The OREsome North Pennines web page will be expanded to accommodate all volunteer and expert reports. There will be links to Google Earth and Flickr where locational information and photos will be lodged to identify areas of conservation concern, linked to photos showing condition.		
Volunteer group created to continue monitoring programme, undertake new research, apply for funding	1	1
Notes on the above: The setting up of a 'Mines Group' is being discussed by key volunteers. A proposal and invitation to join will be put to all OREsome volunteers by the end of October 2018.		
Total number of volunteers	160	68

Output	Application	Actual
Total number of volunteer days contributed	1,600	651
Notes on the above: Total volunteer days based on 31 known active volunteers, contributing c21 days each to the project. This estimated figure includes attendance at project training and other events, plus time spent working in volunteer groups to record, collate and research the sites.		
Volunteer training programme, number of courses, people attending workshops.	not quantified	6 courses 158 people
Notes on the above: Training days supplemented by 21 site visits where consultants trained volunteers and 8 review meetings between volunteers and Historic England staff. 5 news letters have been produced and circulated		
Part time project officer	0.4	0.4
Specialist consultants for geology, archaeology and ecology each contributing 25 days	75	81
Project cost	£89,250	£89,250

All of the key ambitions and outputs for the project have been met. The one area where outputs were less than anticipated was volunteer numbers and volunteer days contributed. The total number of volunteers to be involved was too high a figure in the original application and the reality faced by the project was of a decline in volunteer numbers as noted in section 2.6 and demonstrated in the timeline below.

When	Key volunteer numbers
Summer 2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 85 volunteers expressing an interest in the project 62 volunteers completing a questionnaire and recruited
November 2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 49 volunteers attending the two introductory training events
February 2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 43 volunteers attending 'Getting to Know the OREsome 8' event
March 2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 22 volunteers attended a geology training workshop
May 2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 17 volunteers attended a botany training workshop
December 2016 to July 2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 92 volunteer days in training on each site with archaeology, geology and botany consultants
October 2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 22 volunteers attending a review event one year into the project. Oct 2017
January to March 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 28 volunteer days attending on-site review meetings with Historic England Jan – March 2018
Throughout	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 5 to 9 ~ the average number of volunteers in each survey group, although the lowest number in a group was 2

Volunteer numbers through the key stages of the OREsome North Pennines

4. Feedback from the volunteer evaluation

4.1 ~ The motivation and impact of volunteering

To gain an understanding of the benefits and impacts of volunteering programme with OREsome North Pennines, an online survey was carried out to seek the views from those volunteers who had participated in the project. Two of the questions, relating to motivation and the impact of volunteering were taken directly from a national study completed by HLF in 2011² and have been used as a baseline to compare responses. The results are shown in the tables on page 2 and are shown alongside two similar surveys for conducted with the Hertfordshire and Middlesex Wildlife Trust in 2014 and the North Pennines LiDAR Landscapes in 2017.

Motivation for Volunteering		HLF social impact 2011	HMWT 2014	LiDAR 2017	OREsome 2018
Learning	To learn more about heritage and the natural environment	39%	48%	71%	47%
	An existing interest in the subject	73%	78%	59%	79%
	To learn more about your local area... The North Pennines	n/a	33%	76%	63%
Social interaction	A friend of family member recommended me to get involved	15%	7%	0%	0%
	To meet people/get out of the house	31%	30%	9%	16%
Self esteem	To update my existing skills	33%	22%	21%	39%
Develop Career	To gain some experience/help in getting a job	17%	7%	0%	11%
	To learn some new skills	33%	48%	50%	42%
Mutual aid	To help look after heritage and the natural environment	54%	74%	41%	74%
	To get more involved in the local community	36%	30%	29%	5%
Other	To help others	33%	11%	6%	10%

For OREsome North Pennines the main motivation for volunteering was and existing interest in the subject area and a desire to learn more about heritage and the natural environment of the

² Assessment of the social impact of volunteering in HLF funded projects ~ Year 3
Final Report September 2011 BOP consulting

North Pennines. Linked to this desire for learning, a secondary motivation was to help to look after heritage and the natural environment.

There were low scores for a desire to meet and help others and to get more involved in the local community, responses that indicate the local communities of the area where people are already involved in local activities. The motivation to develop a career through gaining some new experience was another low score, which would reflect the demographic profile of those people volunteering as shown in section 8.

What has been the impact of volunteering?	HLF social impact 2011	HMWT 2014	LiDAR 2017	OREsome 2018
Taken/started a course	14%	27%	33%	26%
Joined/visited a local library	4%	11%	15%	22%
Visited local museums, heritage and countryside sites more often	38%	58%	67%	44%
Volunteered in other local projects	25%	60%	59%	32%
Joined a wildlife or heritage group (e.g. local natural history group, Heritage Trust, etc)	n/a	34%	48%	16%

“I was interested to see how different interests - history, geology and ecology - could be brought together for the benefit of site management”

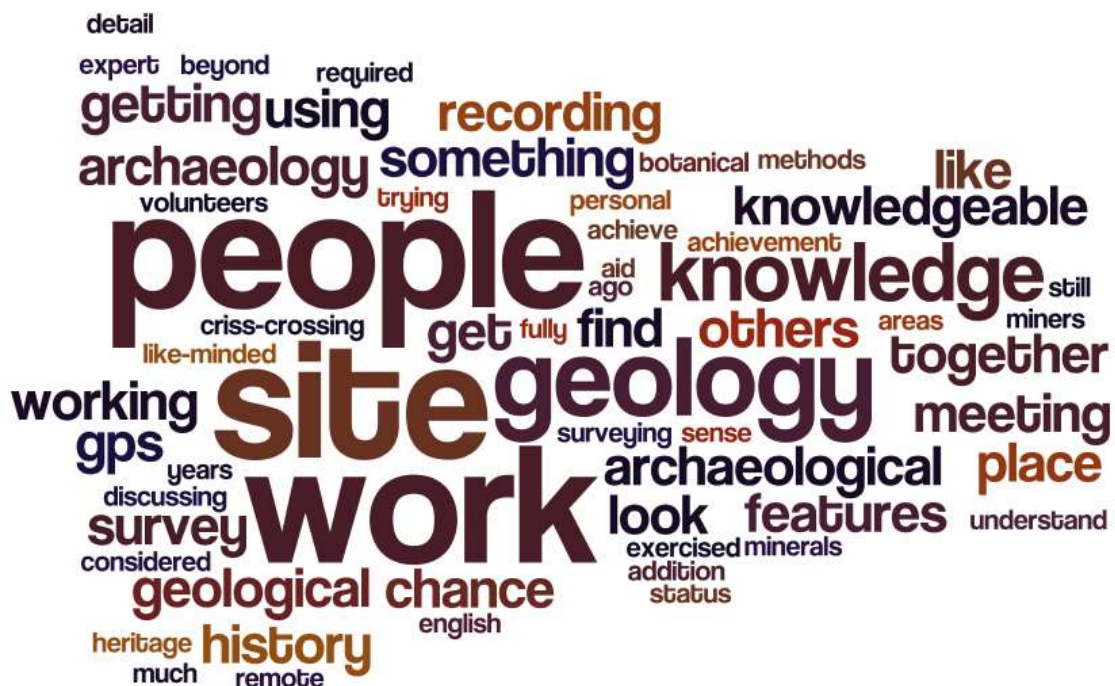
For OREsome North Pennines, all the responses to demonstrate the impact of volunteering were greater than the 2011 national survey. In particular the responses to undertaking more visits, taking/starting another course or additional volunteering were greater than the benchmark and demonstrates a positive impact on wider community involvement that was delivered by the project.

4.2 ~ What was the personal benefit from being involved with OREsome North Pennines?

80% of those volunteers involved derived some or great personal benefit from being involved with the OREsome North Pennines project. Volunteers being offered the opportunity to develop the local knowledge of sites was the main theme from the individual comments relating to this question, evidenced as follows:

- **Knowledge gained** in a sociable, team effort.
- Widened my **areas of interest**
- **Reinforced interest** and also met some interesting/interested people
- **Improved my knowledge** of lead mining operations in the area
- **Learnt more** about chosen site
- **Knowledge** of sites

For one person, there was a great sense of achievement as their involvement in the project has helped with the recovery from an illness.



Word cloud of **most memorable comments** ~ www.wordle.net

Three interlinked themes emerged when looking at the answers to this question.

1. Working together and meeting people

The volunteers welcomed the approach of being able to work together in some interesting and diverse places. Being able to sort out problems, improve communication and work with the different disciplines of archaeology, ecology and geology was valued.

“(There was) a sense of doing something worthwhile working together to achieve the task and recording for future generations to look at.”

2. Undertaking the survey work

Actually, getting out and carrying out the survey work (in all weathers) was highlighted as enjoyable and memorable.

“Getting to know new people, undertaking practical survey work and learning what it is like to work in the geology sector.”

3. Discovery and understanding of the North Pennines Landscape

The volunteers appreciated the surveying of remote sites and the chance to discuss the archaeology, geology and ecology with like-minded people. The support from experts and consultants was also acknowledged as important as this helped in the discussion of heritage features that were not fully understood.

“Finding out how the lead miners used the landscape, the flowers/grasses and the geological features to aid their work. Using a knowledge of plants to find the

minerals and using their knowledge of local geology to build tramways.”

There were a variety of comments and suggested improvements to help improve the volunteer experience that covered three main themes:

- A clear **explanation of what was expected** at the beginning would have been useful.
- **More focussed** aims and objectives at the beginning of the project. Indeed, more focus throughout.
- **Project meetings** not very well organised at times, especially when some volunteers had considerable distances to travel.
- It felt as if the project was in danger of **biting off more than it could chew**.

- **We felt isolated at times** and that someone should have contacted us at times to check if we were doing things in the way that OREsome wanted from us.
- There was not enough impetus generated to keep volunteers on the project, therefore **people melted away**. It was then left to a small number of volunteers to complete. More structured information on the nature of the reports to be produced.
- **More support for the volunteers** when interest began to fall away More interaction between the different site-based groups who all operated entirely independently of each other.

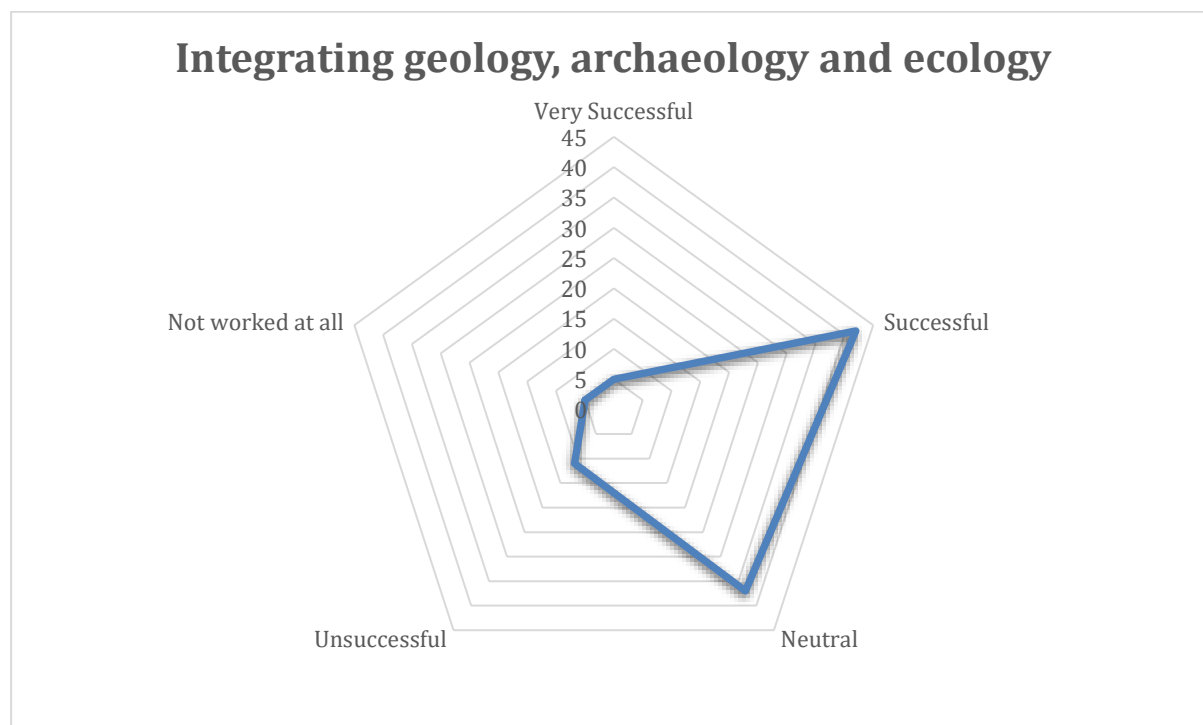
- **Clearer method** for recording
- More help in working out **how to do the survey** on that particular site.
- A **less onerous and complex** system of forms to complete - this felt overly bureaucratic and not particularly useful.



When looking at the three themes and the comments received it is recommended that any follow up to this project considers these points for inclusion and discussion as part of an initial volunteer briefing/training session and that the necessary support is in place to manage the volunteers for the duration of the whole project.

4.5 ~ Integrating geological, archaeological and ecological knowledge

At the outset of the project it was the intention to integrate the geological, archaeological and ecological knowledge of each site survey. The volunteers were asked to consider and rate how well the knowledge had been integrated.



The integration of knowledge has been...	
Very Successful	5%
Successful	42%
Neutral	37%
Unsuccessful	11%
Not worked at all	5%

On balance the volunteers feel that the project has been successful in starting to integrate knowledge at the survey sites with some reservations. Selected comments included:

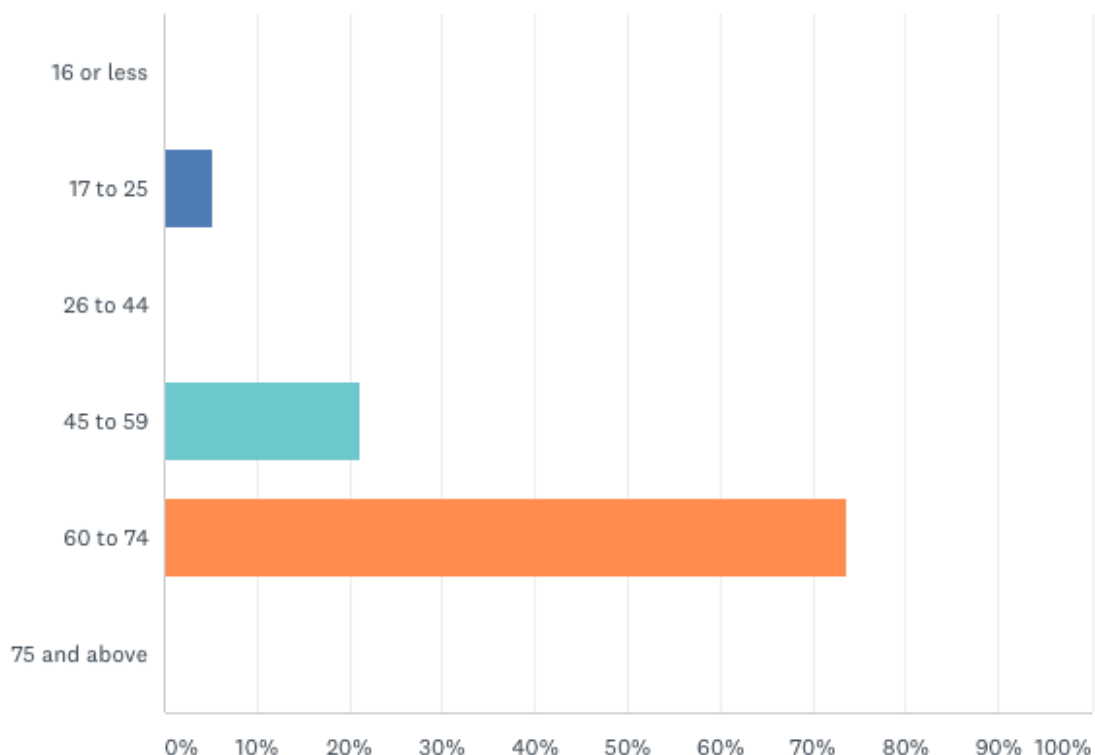
- I believe that we have seen an integration of knowledge with archaeology and geology, along with some ecology; I am not certain that within the time frame and the volunteers individual time commitments that it could be put into the top category
- There was information gathering on each front but while these pieces of information may sit side by side, it is difficult to integrate them truly and meaningfully

- I found the experience very enjoyable and gained interesting knowledge
- It's a great project and everything seemed to be working and going well when I volunteered
- I now have more knowledge of the relevant geology, ecology and lead mining aspects of the site and have found out how the lead miners used this knowledge to aid their work
- The geology and ecology of our site is not unusual compared to the archaeology
- The ecological side was minor on the Coldberry site

And some other areas to improve elements of the volunteer experience included:

- There was not one event coordinated at the site where all the interests were available at once. When they were there at an indoor feedback event they over dominated the proceedings, and didn't listen to the volunteers
- The volunteers in the group did not engage with each other regularly
- I never met a Geologist or Botanist in my 2 years at the site
- I don't know enough about the outcome
- I think some groups it worked in but not in the one I was involved with

4.6 ~ The audiences that volunteered with OREsome North Pennines



Of the volunteers that responded to the questionnaire, 4 people were aged between 45 and 59 and 14 people were age between 60 and 74. 1 person was under 25. The gender balance was split 55% male and 45% female.

4.7 ~ What are the volunteers taking away from the project?

Volunteers were asked for their learning that they are taking away from the project. They expressed thanks for being involved and made comments relating to the complexity and richness of our heritage; the importance of recording and documentation along with their learning from integrating geology, archaeology and ecology

Complexity and richness of our heritage

"All across the range of disciplines this has widened my perspectives on the North Pennines and added to existing interests in a way that I wish to keep going."

"That the more we look at these things, the less we know. Things that have been written in the past and taken for granted should be questioned in the light of current observations."

"Our knowledge is far from complete and more research is called for to assist our understanding of these sites, in all respects."

"How one question led to another, thus expanding my desire for more knowledge. The importance of recording the landscape for the future. An awareness that there are limited or no resources to preserve some of the landscapes. It also made me aware of the work NPAONB does and maybe I would like more involvement with NPAONB."

The importance of recording and documenting our heritage

"That written and photographic records are important as these sites deteriorate, and conservation of all is not possible, or even desirable."

"How important the photographing, sketching and otherwise documenting the manmade features is. With limited resourcing available for conservation work our records may be the only lasting evidence of lead mining features. Over the life of the project we have seen features collapse on the site surveyed."

"The desire to promote the survey to a wider audience especially the next generation."

"Fuller knowledge & understanding of lead mining."

Integrating archaeology, geology and ecology

"That the three subjects are very closely linked and you can work with people from different backgrounds, and together come up with good pieces of work."

"It was good to work with the specialists and enjoy their enthusiasm and knowledge."

"That the North Pennine landscape is covered with industrial archaeology and that industrial archaeology is directly linked to the other disciplines of ecology and geology."

5. Observations, recommendations and what next?

5.1. ~ Observations and recommendations

Based on the number of participants involved and the findings presented through the report, OREsome North Pennines has delivered good value for money for the level of investment and achieved the original ambition undertaking research in an integrated way, having due regard to archaeological, ecological and geological features.

To help with the planning for future volunteer projects, the feedback gained through this evaluation has highlighted the need for future project applications to:

- Allocate more staff time to manage the overall scale and ambition of the project. It is clear from some of the feedback that the ambition of the project was greater than the resource available
- Evaluate as you go along. Consider the use of a formative approach to evaluation where the information is being collected during the project implementation period to help improve the overall design and performance
- Take on board the suggested improvements from the volunteers about the need for support and organisation and feedback to help look after their needs as well as a simplified survey methodology

The findings above and the feedback from volunteers are similar to the LiDAR Landscapes evaluation (another HLF Heritage Grant Scheme). The key learning to emerge from both projects about the need for added volunteer support should be taken on board by the AONB (and HLF) when preparing (and assessing) future funding applications for similar projects.

5.2 ~ What next?

The achievements and success of OREsome North Pennines in contributing to and enriching the thinking and understanding of the mining heritage in the North Pennines has been considerable and it is recognised that it will be important to maintain the investment, continuity and status of the skilled volunteers involved within the OREsome project.

There is a momentum and willingness to set up a North Pennines Mining Group to carry on the work throughout the North Pennines, recognising that there may be other local heritage groups (such as the Allenheads Trust) who could take on an activity depending on the location of a site in need of monitoring and additional work.

It will be important for the group to be recognised and accepted by the statutory authorities and as a continuation from OREsome North Pennines there will be the need for ongoing support in order to empower volunteers to be proactive to do something about recording, monitoring and undertaking physical works on sites.

To help facilitate this ambition Historic England would work with a constituted group and seek to establish what small scale physical work could be carried out without a Section 17 agreement³.

³ Section 17 agreement of the 1979 Historic Monuments Act ~

Following on from the OREsome North Pennines project the intention is to:

1. **Develop the North Pennines Mining Group** ~ offering practical support to the volunteers to develop something more structured that will enable an independent group to work together and grow as a self-sustaining entity with the ultimate aim of the group being able to undertake and offer the necessary training on health & safety and reporting, undertaking recording, monitoring, completing physical works and submitting records to agreed contacts and/or portal. A Historic England Capacity Support Grant and a Resilient Heritage bid to HLF could help support the development of the group.
2. **Develop a large-scale project looking at the Mining History of the North Pennines** ~ from experience landowners are not interested so can a framework of activity will be provided to enable the North Pennines Mining Group to continue to be engaged.

Acknowledgements

I would like to offer my thanks to Sarah Tooze of the North Pennines AONB and those volunteers who completed the online survey and have provided the information and insight that enabled this work to be carried out.

In addition, Sarah, Andy Lees, Tom Gledhill, Sarah Holland and Pete Jackson provided the examples of good practice and challenges faced that I have tried to reflect in this report. Any errors and misinterpretations are in good faith and remain our responsibility.

Simon Lees

Countryside Training Partnership

October 2018