

AREA

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Approved
Feb 2004

A Looking across the valley downstream over Pateley Bridge.

Nidderdale Valley

(Low Sikes to Pateley Bridge)



Description

This Character Area is the U-shaped Nidd valley from the confluence of Blayshaw Gill with the Nidd south east of Lofthouse to Pateley Bridge and is approximately 23km² in size. The area encompasses the valley sides and narrow flat valley bottom including Gouthwaite Reservoir. Several wooded gills and becks incise the valley sides. The hamlets of Ramsgill and Wath are located at either end of the reservoir with several scattered farmsteads along the valley floor and valley sides. The area has a partially enclosed feel and is diverse to complex with good, varied tree cover. This is a pleasant and attractive, relatively-isolated Character Area within the Nidderdale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

The area was heavily influenced by Byland and Fountains Abbeys during monastic times (both had granges in the area). There is evidence of milling at Wath dating from the 16th to the 19th century.

Part of Scotgate Ash Quarry falls within this Character Area (on the hill on the north-east valley side above Pateley Bridge.) The quarry was a source of stone for important public buildings around the country including the National Gallery and York Station and its Hotel.

Key Characteristics

Geology, soils and drainage

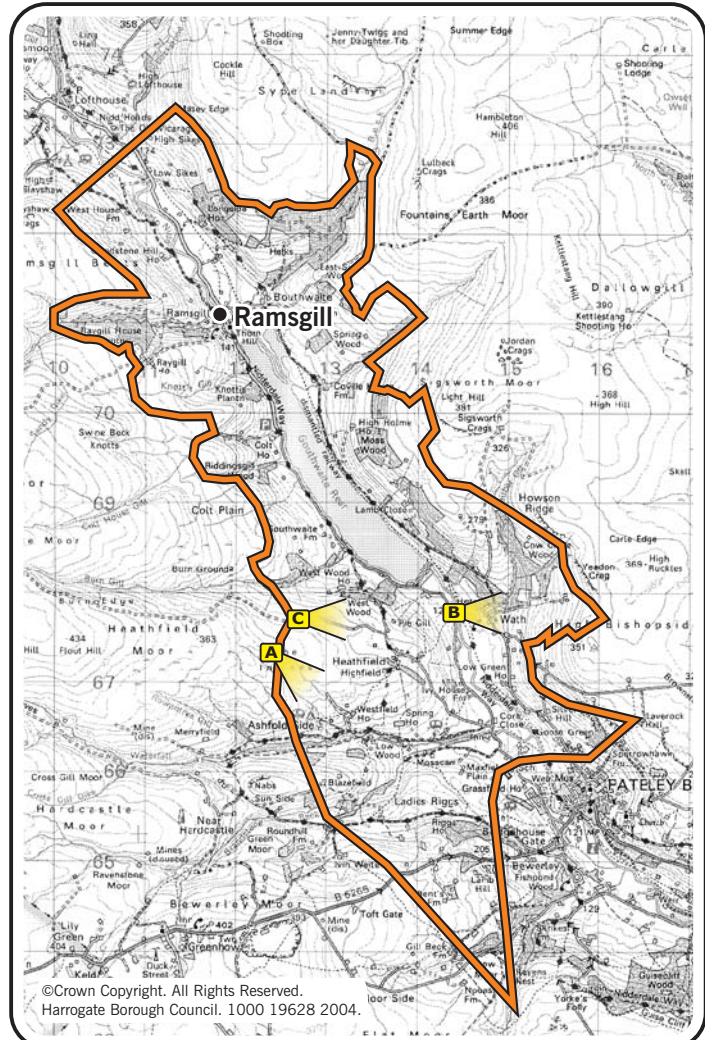
- Millstone Grit solid geology. Moraines are also present. Mainly brown soils with surface water gley Cambic Stagnohumic in areas.

Landform and drainage pattern

- The valley is U-shaped with steep sides that widen at Gouthwaite.
- Rock outcrops on the upper valley sides.
- The River Nidd flows south.
- Becks fed by springs form narrow valleys up the valley sides with some waterfalls.
- Gouthwaite reservoir is a large mass of water in the centre of the Character Area.

Land use, fields, boundaries trees and wildlife

- The dominant land use is grassland for intensive livestock production.
- Field size is generally small to medium. Early enclosure in lower valley sides and parliamentary enclosure higher up.



HARROGATE DISTRICT Landscape Character Assessment

Location in Harrogate District

- Area boundary*
- Camera location & direction



Not to Scale



NB Due to the nature of landform, surface treatment and soil/geology composition Character area boundaries cannot be delineated precisely and should be considered "transitional".



B Wath.

Key Characteristics (Cont'd)

- Field boundaries are dry stone walls with some hedges in the valley bottom.
- Individual trees in the area tend to be associated with the river and the valley bottom with fewer higher up the valley sides.
- There is a notable number of pollarded trees in the field walls in the valley.
- There are several blocks of Ancient Semi-Natural woodland as well as areas of newer woodland and large conifer plantations.
- Several smaller woodlands in the area may have Ancient Semi-Natural origins.
- Gouthwaite Reservoir is an SSSI and the Character Area is surrounded by the moorland SSSI and Special Area of Conservation.
- Sites of Interest for Nature Conservation are:
 - Nidd Marsh marshy grassland at the southern end of Gouthwaite reservoir;
 - Lofthouse Spoil Heaps (calcareous grassland) at the boundary with Character Area 3;
 - Throstle Nest Wood and Cow Close Wood (oak woods).

Settlement pattern, built environment and communications

- Remote hamlets and farmsteads are scattered along the valley floor.
- Field barns are present but not in large numbers.
- Vernacular building material is local sandstone/gritstone with stone slate roofs.
- There are dozens of small disused quarries along the valley sides.
- Telegraph poles carry electricity and telephone lines to the settlements.
- Caravan site and camping at Ashfoldside Beck, a tributary of the Nidd.

Sensitivities & Pressures

- The character of this area is sensitive to the loss of trees and woodland cover and visibility of modern development at Pateley Bridge.
- Pressures along Ashfoldside Beck corridor resulting from the presence of a caravan and camping site for much of its length could impact on landscape character.
- Nidderdale High School is a prominent modern building. The continued development of this site impacts upon the character of the edge of Pateley Bridge, as does other modern development in the area.

- Neglect of local vernacular and resulting changing character of built form in the area e.g. loss of traditional slate roofs on field barns changing character of the buildings.
- Potential neglect and loss of areas of Ancient Semi-Natural woodland which are too small to be registered.
- Large conifer plantations detract from character of native woodlands. Felling of large areas causes scars on hillsides.
- Neglect of heritage features could result in their loss and harm to landscape character.

Guidelines

Aim: New development, tourism and recreation facilities to respect landscape character.

- Development should respect vernacular, settlement pattern and overall landscape character.
- Modern farm buildings should relate to existing farmsteads and be located to minimise visual impact.
- There is a limit to the extent to which this landscape can accommodate an expansion of existing facilities and the creation of new ones.
- Where development is allowed, appropriate provision of space for the implementation of a suitable landscape scheme is required.

Aim: To ensure the long-term future of native woodland and trees in the area.

- Encourage research to identify small areas of Ancient Semi-Natural woodland and press for their protection.
- Maintain the well-wooded appearance of this Character Area through appropriate new planting. In particular, explore ways to increase connections between woodlands.
- Encourage management of conifer woodland to introduce diversity to structure in keeping with native woodland character and avoid large areas of clear felling.

Aim: Protect the historic features integral to landscape character and the understanding of its development.

- Support initiatives to research history and heritage of the area and identify features worthy of protection and implement a plan for protection.