

AREA 26

Approved
Feb 2004

A Hartwith Moor looking north east.



Hartwith Moor Grassland Plateau

Description

This is a pocket of flat to gently undulating grassland plateau south of Brimham Rocks covering 2km². The area is dominated by the regular, organised pattern of parliamentary field enclosures with dry stone wall field boundaries. Prior to parliamentary enclosure the area would have been open moor. The linear minor roads through the area conform to field pattern. The simplicity and consistency of the muted green square fields is harmonious and the lack of large settlement makes the landscape seem remote.

The area is large scale and open with vast views due to sparse coverage of trees and woodland. Brimham Rocks SSSI abuts the northern edge of the Character Area and its contrasting landform and rock outcrops create a unique and unusual backdrop to the fields.

With the exception of telegraph poles that cross the area it is attractive. Brimham Rocks, and the strong field pattern, are visual elements of interest in this Character Area which lies within the Nidderale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

Key Characteristics

Geology, soils and drainage

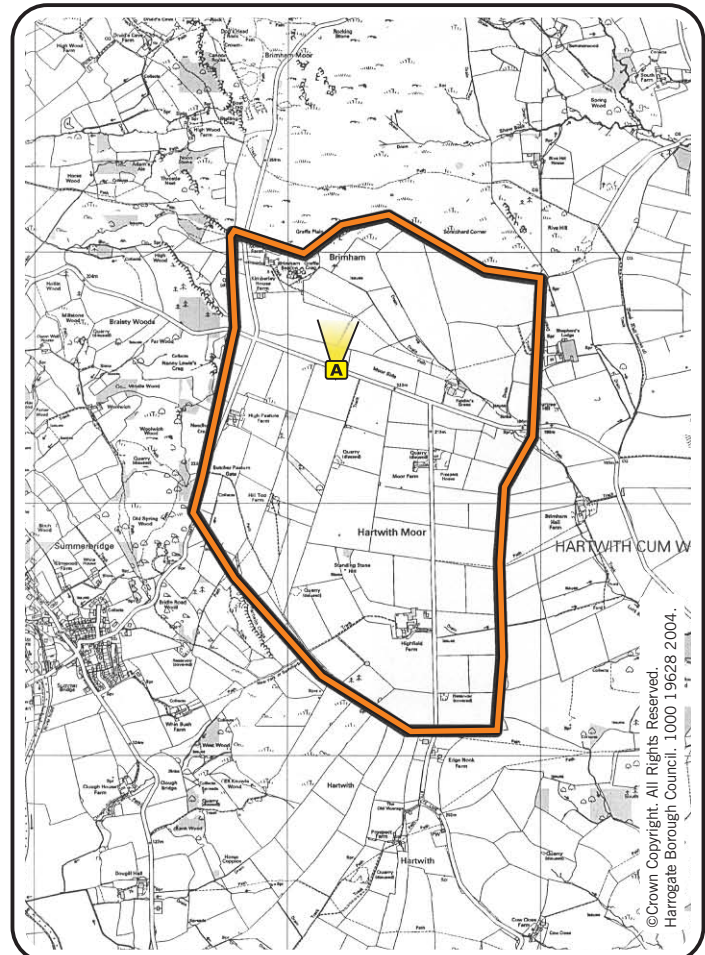
- Millstone grit solid geology
- Slowly-permeable, seasonally-waterlogged, fine loamy over clayey soils with patches of loamy acidic soil with a wet peaty surface horizon. Also well-drained, coarse, loamy soil over rock.

Landform and drainage pattern

- Flat plateau landform that slopes gradually down to the east.
- Craggs are characteristic of the western edge.
- Drainage ditches along field boundaries particularly those that abut Brimham Rocks.

Land use, fields, boundaries, trees and wildlife

- Agricultural land managed as permanent pasture.
- Small to medium sized fields of parliamentary enclosure bound by stone walls.
- Woodland cover is sparse but for a couple of small conifer plantations and deciduous clumps around farmsteads/houses.



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".

- Very few individual trees along field boundaries with more along roadside.

Settlement, built environment and communications

- No major settlement but for one or two individual small farmsteads and houses.
- Traditional building materials are local sandstone and stone slate roofs.
- Two disused quarries probably provided stone for the dry stone wall field boundaries.

Sensitivities & Pressures

- ▶ The character of this area will change if stone walls are not maintained as this would impact on the distinctive landscape pattern. Long-term maintenance of stone walls characteristic of the area may prove costly for farmers in the current financial climate.
- ▶ The area is sensitive to change due to its simplicity. The introduction of large woodland blocks would detract from character. However, the introduction of individual or small groups of native trees may result in an acceptable change to character.
- ▶ Much of the biodiversity of the area has been lost as a result of intensive land management.

Guidelines

Aim: To maintain the strong field pattern and sparse settlement pattern.

- ▶ Secure long term future of stone walls through promotion of wall building and possible grant scheme in consultation with DEFRA and the Nidderdale AONB staff.

- ▶ Development that detracts from the strong regular field pattern should be discouraged.
- ▶ New farm buildings will impact upon landscape pattern. Where needed they should relate to existing farmsteads and be located to minimise visual intrusion.
- ▶ New tree planting must not detract from landscape pattern. Tree planting should be small scale and associated with farmsteads, avoiding skyline locations.

Aim: To improve habitat diversity.

- ▶ Encourage reintroduction of biodiversity through alternative grassland management in line with the aims of the Harrogate District Biodiversity Action Plan.
- ▶ Provide information about the value of the area to wildlife and landscape character and cultural heritage.
- ▶ Explore opportunities to develop wildlife links across the area and reintroduce traditional hay meadow management.