

AREA 72

Approved
Feb 2004

A Looking south east from bridleway east of Bishop Monkton.



Holbeck Valley Bottom

Description

This intimate character area is the remnant of what was an extensive wetland. The corridor covers 1.5km² and follows the course of Holbeck from Copgrove in the south to the River Ure in the north. Agricultural improvement and drainage has claimed the surrounding land for intensive agricultural use yet this area survives and is of great environmental value.

Land use is diverse and at the north end of the Character Area regular fields are managed for both grass and arable production. South of these fields the landscape is open, marshy grassland subject to winter flooding, except for patches of higher land that remain dry. The corridor is well-wooded particularly to the west of Holbeck. The woodland, along with the undulating landform of the surrounding intensively farmed arable land, encloses the area channelling and shortening views. Traditional hedgerow field boundaries are outgrown in many cases except at the edge of the Character Area, where they are maintained as the boundary between grassland and arable land.

Holbeck flows through the middle of the area and together with Ings Drain supports many species of marginal vegetation including stands of reeds.

This is a haven in the midst of arable land and has rich flora and fauna. There are no roads to the area, although there are several farm tracks and few footpaths through or crossing it. Consequently the area is quite remote.

Key Characteristics

Geology, soils and drainage

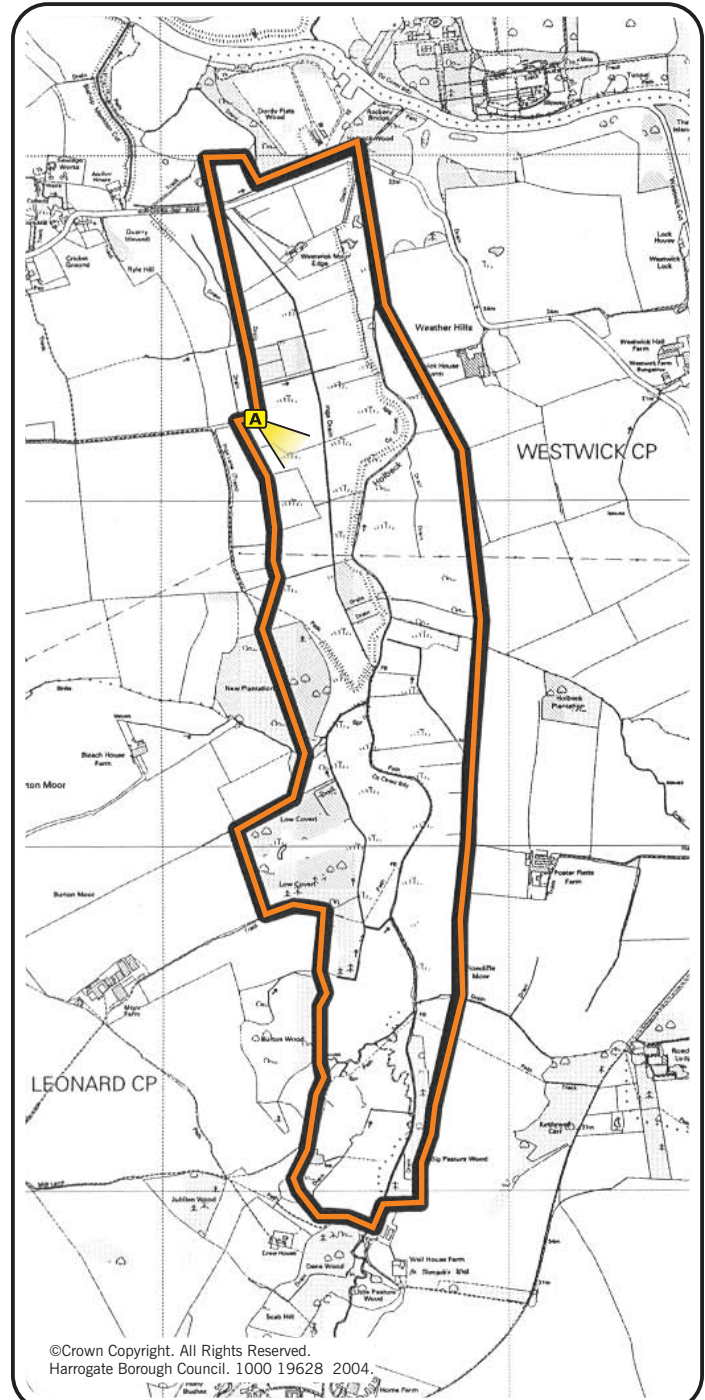
- Sherwood sandstone solid geology overlain with silt and clay drift geology.
- Stoneless, clayey, fine silty and fine loamy ground water soils.

Landform and drainage pattern

- Flat landform below 20m AOD.
- Holbeck runs the length of the Character Area with a network of ditches including Ings Drain providing drainage to the surrounding farmland.
- A few springs plus Monagh's Well.

Land use, fields, boundaries, trees and wildlife

- A mixture of improved and semi-improved grassland, few arable fields to the north and wetland.



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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".

Key Characteristics (Cont'd)

- ▶ Field boundaries of native hedges outgrown and gappy in the middle of the area becoming better maintained towards the boundary.
- ▶ Several blocks of mixed and deciduous woodland including Ancient Semi-Natural woodland at Dark Walk Wood and Dene Wood.
- ▶ Very few scattered individual trees.
- ▶ Bishop Monkton Ings is an SSSI.

Settlement, built environment and communications

- ▶ No settlement but for one building in the north of the area.

Sensitivities & Pressures

- ▶ The influence of surrounding arable farming practices on water quality and as a result on habitat and wildlife diversity in the area may result in change.
- ▶ Poor public access to this area which is a valued resource contributing to the diverse nature of the District landscape character.
- ▶ Pressures for change are low and linked to the farming industry and agricultural policy.

Guidelines

Aim: To conserve and enhance the unique wetland character amidst arable land.

- ▶ Promote habitat management and agricultural management of surrounding areas to protect this valued landscape and wildlife resource.
- ▶ Encourage monitoring of wildlife in the area.
- ▶ Promote the improvement of public access and the possible use of this area as an educational resource for its geology, soils, habitats and wildlife.
- ▶ Explore opportunities related to less intensive land management under the Countryside Stewardship Scheme in consultation with landowners and DEFRA.