



Land of Oak & Iron Trust

Celebrating Heritage, Culture & Landscape

A Charitable Incorporated Organisation
Charity No. 1188152

Trustees' Annual Report 2021 - 22



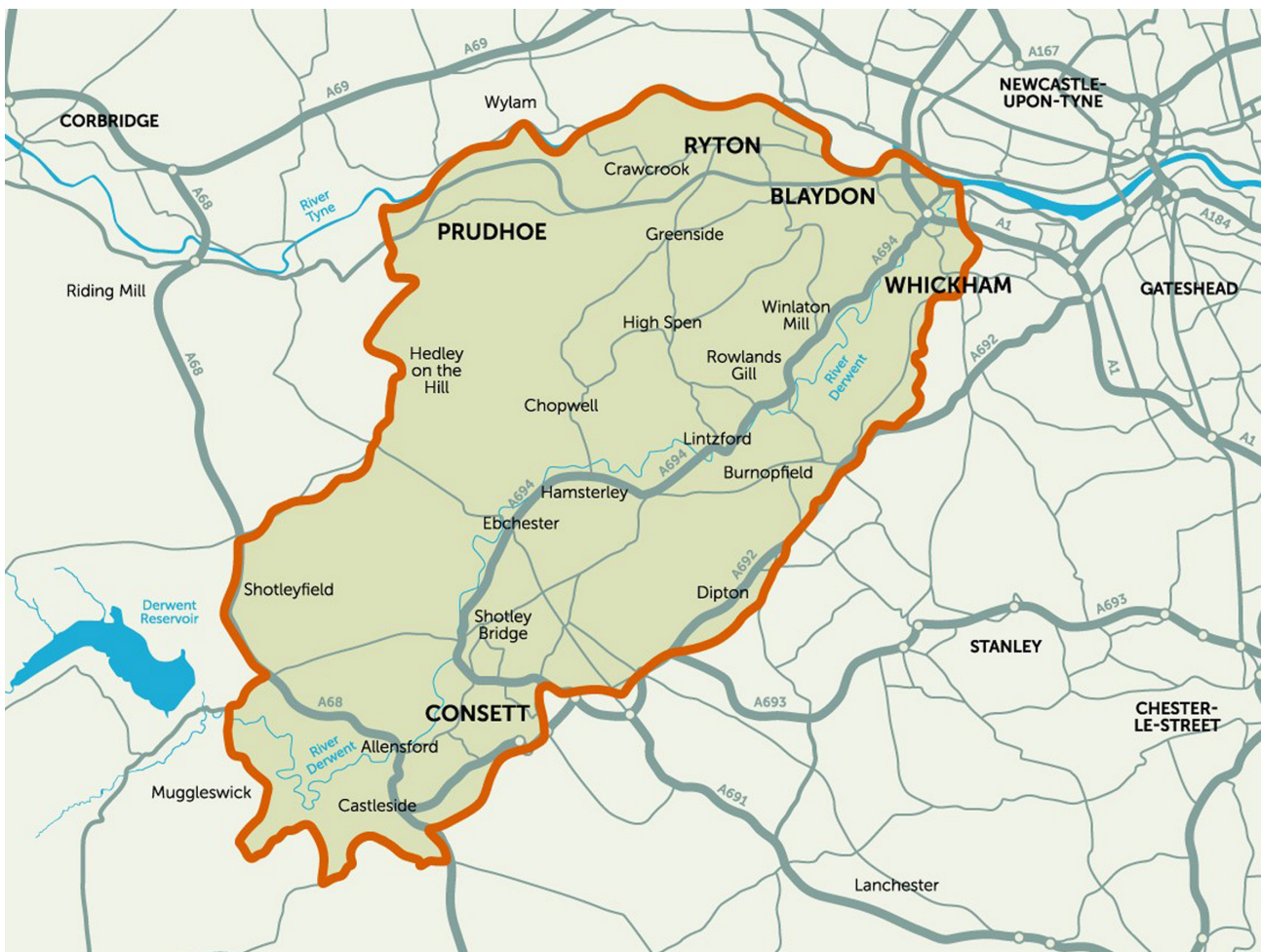
Low Dam Winlaton Mill

Photo © Barry Tupper



Trustees' Annual Report 2021 - 2022

The Land of Oak & Iron



The Land of Oak & Iron is centred on the River Derwent, which passes through Northumberland, Durham and Gateshead before joining the River Tyne. The area shown above for the purpose of identification only covers much of the river catchment and also includes part of the Tyne valley near Prudhoe.

The Genesis of the Trust

In 2016 Groundwork NE and Cumbria successfully bid for four- year Heritage Lottery funding to form the Land of Oak & Iron Landscape Partnership (The Partnership). During the following four years of its existence the Partnership succeeded in breathing new life into the history and heritage of the region for future generations to enjoy.

The Partnership improved our environment through planting a new woodland and creating a wetland. Fish can swim further up the River Derwent thanks to a new fish pass. Woodland owners have been helped to access funding to manage better our ecologically rich ancient, and more recently planted, woodlands.

Communities have benefited by having improved footpaths, so people can better explore the area on foot or by bike. The story of our internationally significant heritage is being told through three Heritage Centres, beautiful interpretation around the area, and specially commissioned music and drama performances. 320 young people have gained a recognised qualification by learning traditional skills.

The Trust

The Land of Oak & Iron Trust evolved from a Legacy Group formed by a group of volunteers to continue the work of the Landscape Partnership beyond its four-year life.

The Trust was established on 20 August 2019 and registered with the Charity Commission as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) on 24 February 2020. The Trust's financial year runs from 1 April to 31 March. This first report is in respect of the period 24 February 2021 to 31 March 2022.

The objects of the Trust as set out in its governing document are:

- To promote the conservation, protection and enhancement of the natural, industrial and cultural heritage of the Land of Oak & Iron
- To advance the education of the general public in the natural, industrial and cultural heritage of the Land of Oak & Iron



Photo © Peter Atkinson

Activities

Publications

This group is interested in identifying published works about the history, legends and culture of the Land of Oak & Iron, many of which are out-of-print and difficult to find.

Three books have been recreated from out-of-print originals, namely:

Men of Iron by Professor M.W. Flinn is the definitive work about Ambrose Crowley, the Midlands' ironmaster whose huge manufacturing centre established in the Lower Derwent Valley at the dawn of the Industrial Revolution transformed the industrial and social history of the area.

Tales of Derwentdale a collection of myths, legends and anecdotes of farm and village life in the area, was last published in 1902 by J.W. Fawcett. The new edition includes an original biography written by volunteer Val Scully, and is illustrated with prints by the famous wood-engraver and naturalist Thomas Bewick (1753-1828) who was born at Mickley in the Land of Oak & Iron.

Thread of Iron by Douglas Vernon tells the story of the iron industry in Shotley Bridge, where the famous German sword makers were based, and Consett, home of the Consett Iron Company from foundation to closure in 1980. The influences of these industrial enterprises stretched throughout the length of the Land of Oak & Iron, from the edges of the Pennines to the River Tyne and far beyond.

During the period to which this report relates two new books have been published

Crowley's is an attractive A4 softback with 44 pages, illustrated in colour throughout. It tells of the industrial and social history of the Crowley ironworks 1691 – 1966. It comprises an essay entitled '*Crowley's Crew: from Royalists to Radicals*' by Susan Lynn, local historian and Newcastle City Guide and extracts from the 1754 diary of Swedish industrial spy Reinhold Angerstein, who visited Crowley's in 1754.

Releasing the Genie of Coal in which historian Bill Lancaster reveals how nationally significant the Derwent Valley has been in the development of the mining industry; and Peter Stark's visionary essay poses the fascinating question as to whether the level of innovation involved in the industrial developments in the area's mining and steel production could not now be applied to the global challenges we face.

An accompanying PowerPoint presentation for secondary school students and staff is available for schools to download.

Heritage Education and Development

This group (formerly known as the Young Persons Group) was established to encourage young people aged between 5 and 24 years to take pride in their heritage, and to help conserve the culture and landscape of the area for themselves and future generations.

This is done by developing projects based on traditional cultural activities such as:

- literature
- local heroes
- music [hand bell ringing] and dance [rapper (sword) dancing]
- traditional skills, such as making proggy mats
- heritage industries, such as coal mining and iron and steel production
- the historical importance of the Derwent Valley
- general awareness of what lies within the landscape

These projects are then offered to schools, colleges and youth groups to broaden and enhance their regular activities, delivered in a meaningful and fun way.

Within the first 6 months of rolling out activities (immediately prior to Coronavirus lockdown) the Group had:-

- engaged with 250 'freshers' at Derwentside College to identify leaders for the Heritage Orienteering project
- Successfully delivered two Heritage Orienteering Projects
- Successfully delivered one Mining Project (spread over 3 full and 3 half days)

All of our offerings have been well received and resulted in 'word of mouth' recommendations and requests for our projects from other schools.

Lockdown has had a massive impact on the delivery of projects. The schools were closed for part of the period under review and on restrictions being lifted volunteers were understandably reluctant to go in to schools to deliver projects. A Heritage Orienteering project based at Blackhill Park in Consett for pupils at Collierley Junior School in Dipton had to be cancelled at the last minute owing to a shortage of volunteers. The method of delivering a project based on the coal mining industry and the Pitman Poet, Tommy Armstrong, was changed to enable volunteers to video record their presentations. The project was eventually delivered to two classes at Consett Junior School using this material with a reduced number of volunteers attending the school and the visit to the Beamish Open Air Museum.



Photo © Barry Tupper

Heritage Centre - Winlaton Mill

Research (formerly the Mapping Group)

This group aims to provide information to help local people and visitors of all ages and abilities explore the landscape of the Land of Oak & Iron, to understand it and enjoy what it contains, with a particular emphasis on the industrial past.

The Mapping Group has developed a base map of the Land of Oak & Iron and surrounding area which shows the land contours, major and minor water courses, settlements, woodland areas, and the road network. To this we are adding topic-specific information to produce “topic maps”.

In the mapping project we are interested in helping people explore the history of the area. To do this we combine selected information from maps spanning a period of over two hundred years into a single map. This is then supplemented by additional research which allows us to create a narrative to accompany the maps. In some cases, the history can extend over several centuries.

The area covered by the maps is considerably larger than the Land of Oak & Iron itself. This has been done to allow the wider connections between communities and other sites, which existed long before the Land of Oak & Iron was conceived, to be appreciated.

The research that supports the preparation of these maps is compiled in the form of a spreadsheet for each topic. The current topic maps include:

- Mills
- Early Wooden Waggonways (1625-1800)
- Historic Roads
- Township Boundaries
- Bridges and river features - under development
- Coal Industry - under development

The data on which the maps are based are initially plotted manually and subsequently digitised using scalable vector graphics editing software. This method was chosen because it enables a user to zoom into the map without its losing definition. Several maps have been published on our website. The ambition of the group was that the maps should be available in an interactive format, so that users could select specific information to reveal additional data and to follow links to websites. We had assumed that at some stage we would have to seek funding to engage IT professionals in this task, but volunteers have worked hard to solve the technical difficulties themselves. An experimental interactive map relating to the coal industry is available on our website at <https://loit.org.uk/coalmapv3>

We are working on creating interactive maps relating to mills, turnpikes and tollbars and the iron and steel industry. In addition to displaying these maps on our website, we are hoping to be able to create versions for display on touchscreen kiosks in the heritage centres.

Websites

The Trust is but one, independent, partner in the Land of Oak & Iron project. Groundwork North East, which led the now defunct LOI Landscape Partnership project, retain an interest in the project as owner and manager of the Land of Oak & Iron Heritage Centre at Winlaton Mill. Groundwork established a website when they were lead partner of the Landscape Partnership and have continued to maintain it. When the Trust was established, it created a website of its own. It was agreed by the Trust and Groundwork that maintaining two unconnected websites was a potential source of confusion to the public. A separate website for the Trust, however, remains desirable, particularly as a repository for our maps, the accumulated research and education material and documents relevant to the Trust, such as its constitution, its policies and procedures and its annual reports. With that in mind, the Trust revamped its website as the Land of Oak & Iron Heritage Education and Research Site. On its front page it is described as a site created by Land of Oak & Iron volunteers and there is a link to a new website managed by Groundwork, which is described as the main Land of Oak & Iron Website. That website, in turn has a page about the Trust and a link to the Land of Oak & Iron Heritage Education and Research site.

Public Benefit

In carrying out these activities, the Trustees have taken into account the Charity Commission's Guidance on the public benefit requirement (PB1, PB2 & PB3) and have complied with their duty to have due regard to this guidance when exercising their powers and duties.

Achievements and Performance

The Trust for virtually all of its existence has had to operate in conformity with the Government's public health regulations and guidance arising from the Coronavirus pandemic. For parts of the period under review, schools were closed which restricted the activities of the Young Persons' Group. Notwithstanding that, meetings have taken place using electronic equipment and software. The Trust has been able to maintain teams using Microsoft's Teams software and some progress has been made in respect of all the Trust's activities detailed above, albeit not at the pace and to the extent that would have been possible had the public health restrictions not been in place. The Trust has also been able to maintain contact and liaise with other bodies involved in perpetuating the aims and ambitions of the former Land of Oak & Iron Landscape Partnership. Fortunately restrictions were gradually relaxed during the period under review and were all lifted on 21 February 2022. The challenge for the Trust is to move forward to meet the aspirations of those who set it up in 2019. In February 2022 the Trust arranged a meeting for volunteers to express their views on the future management and activities of the Trust. This was highly successful. It provided many ideas, most of which are contained in a draft strategic plan which the trustees hope to publish in Autumn 2022 and act upon.

Financial Review

The Trust's receipts amounted to £3,717: comprising income from the sale of books of £3012. The total expenditure of the Trust was £2,117, leaving a balance of £1,600 represented by cash in the bank .

There was a balance of £6,982 in the Trust's bank account on 31 March including £3,324.00 unspent grants obtained by the HEAD group for their projects. With the lifting of Covid restrictions, plans were advanced to deliver planned projects.

A balance of £2,058 remains in general funds.

A copy of the annual accounts is attached to this report as Appendix A

Reserves policy

The Trust has no employees and the costs of winding up the Trust would be nominal. The only need for reserves at present is to cover essential running costs and emergency expenditure for which the trustees consider it prudent to maintain a general reserve representing approximately twelve months' running costs (this year set at £800). In addition the Trust reserves £260 to cover printing costs.

Structure, Government and Management

Government

The Trust's governing document is its Constitution, based on the Charity Commission's 'foundation' model CIO Constitution.

The Trust is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation. Its only members are the trustees.

The governing document provides that apart from the first charity trustees, every trustee must be appointed by a resolution passed at a properly convened meeting of the charity trustees. In selecting individuals for appointment as charity trustees, the charity trustees must have regard to the skills, knowledge and experience needed for the effective administration of the CIO.

The first charity trustees have taken steps to increase the number of trustees by seeking applications from volunteers of the Trust and of other bodies involved in perpetuating the aims and ambitions of the former Land of Oak & Iron Landscape Partnership, by considering their skills, knowledge and experience.

The Trust has no employees. There are 40 volunteers who have registered to help us.

The Trustees would like to thank the volunteers for their valuable contribution to the work of the Trust. The Trustees are advertising to attract more volunteers. Not all those who volunteered for the Partnership have registered with us and steps are being taken to encourage them to do so. Separate registration is necessary for insurance purposes and to enable the Trust to comply with data protection legislation.

The Trust has agreed policies relating to:

Code of Behaviour	Health & Safety
Conflicts of Interest	Risk Management
Expenses	Safeguarding
Equal Opportunities	Safe Recruitment
Financial Controls	Supervision
GDPR General Policy	

Volunteers are informed of these policies on joining and they are available for inspection on the Trust's website.

Structure and Management

Board of Trustees

Special Interest Groups:

- Heritage Education and Development
- Mapping
- Publications

Other groups will be formed as circumstances allow.

Each group includes a trustee and is led by a Lead Volunteer

Management and Finance Group:

This group comprises: the trustees, the Lead person from each of the Special Interest Groups, co-opted volunteers, interested parties. The purpose of the Group is to discuss and agree general finance and other key management issues.

Partnerships

The Trust is represented on:

Delivery Group

The Delivery Group brings together representatives of the three Heritage Centres: Winlaton Mill, Prudhoe and Blackhill (Consett), Groundwork North East, and the Trust with the common aims of promoting and celebrating the heritage, culture and landscape of the Land of Oak & Iron. The Trust is represented by two trustees.



Partnership Group

The Partnership Group is made up of the three Local Authorities (Gateshead, Durham and Northumberland), Groundwork North East, and the Trust. The group identifies opportunities and priorities for joint working and collaboration to build on the success and vision of the Landscape Partnership. The Trust is represented by two trustees.

Working Groups

Working groups are ad-hoc groups intended to be a coordination forum for like-minded organisations working within the Land of Oak & Iron. The make up of these groups will vary according to the subject matter and area of geographical focus.

Reference and Administrative

The name of the charity is Land of Oak & Iron Trust. It uses no other name.

The charity is registered in England and Wales (Charity number 118152).

The address of the principal office of the charity is 19 Springhouse Lane Ebchester DH8 0QF.

The first trustees were:

Barry Raymond Tupper (Chairman)
Marion Schooler
Robert Henry Hill
Geoff Marshall

One new trustee was appointed by a resolution of the first trustees on 21 January 2021

Valerie Boyle

Two further trustees have been appointed with effect from 14 April 2021 namely

John Hunter
Michael Turner

Barry Tupper chaired the Trust from its inception and worked tirelessly to promote its interests. He was responsible for producing the Trust's policies and represented the trustees on the Young Persons' group. Barry for personal reasons announced his intention to resign as Chair and trustee but remained in post until new trustees were found. Barry's resignation took effect from 14 April 2021 and the trustees wish to place on record their thanks to him for the work he did for the Partnership and for his efforts in establishing the Trust.

Robert Hill retired as a trustee with effect from 31 July 2021. Robert made an outstanding contribution to the work of the Trust. Not only did he manage with brilliant proficiency the work of the Mapping team, he contributed to the efforts of the Publications group, set up and managed the website, acquired the a charity subscription to Microsoft Teams and set it up. Happily Robert still makes a contribution to the work of the Research group and is currently working on a topic map relating to the iron and steel industry.

Bob James was appointed as a trustee on 29 November 2021 and Valerie Boyle resigned as a trustee with effect from 31 December 2021.

The trustees as at 31 March 2022 were:

Geoff Marshall

Marion Schooler

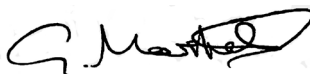
Michael Turner

John Hunter

Bob James

Approved by the Trustees on: 12 September 2022

Signed on behalf of the Trustees:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'G. Marshall', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Full Name: Geoff Marshall

Position: Trustee



Appendix A

Accounts for the Period: 1 April 2021 - 31 March 2022

Income

	2021-22	2020-2021
Book Sales	3,012	1,323
Donations		175
Grants		11,696
Merchandise		
Insurance Claim	650	
Talks	55	
Bank Interest	0	0
	£3,717	£13,250
<i>Income / Expenditure</i>	<i>£1,600</i>	<i>£5,382</i>

Expenditure

	2021-22	2020-21
Computing / Website	25	210
Education		196
Events		1,100
Insurance	293	283
Mapping	68	156
Merchandise		89
Office Equipment	703	2,430
Postage / Sundries	150	31
Publishing	817	2,367
Room Hire		115
Stationery	61	160
Travel		
Young Persons' Activities		582
	£2,117	£7,718

Balances

	31/03/2022	31/03/2021
Current Account	6,982	5,208
Cash in Hand		174
	£6,982	£5,382
Liabilities		
Creditors		
Debtors		
Grant expenditure pending	3,324	3,324
Net Worth	£3,658	£2,058

Assets and Reserves

	31/03/2022	31/03/2021
Assets		
Fixed Assets		
Merchandise	1,600	1,160
	£1,600	£1,160
Reserves		
General Fund	3,658	2,058
Restricted Reserves	3,324	3,324
	£6,982	£5,382

NOTE: Prior to Registration as a CIO the Trust had accrued reserves of £3,705