

HISTORIC ENVIRONMENT OPPORTUNITY MAP USER GUIDE

BREAKING NEW GROUND LANDSCAPE PARTNERSHIP

GROUND DISTURBANCE PROJECT

David Robertson with Rob Hawkes



BREAKING NEW GROUND: GROUND DISTURBANCE PROJECT

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Introduction

The need for physical ground disturbance on Brecks heaths has long been recognised, but its importance was only recently evidenced by the Brecks Biodiversity Audit (BBA)¹. The BBA identified 12,845 species, over 2000 of which were considered a priority for conservation (e.g. species in Red Data Book or Biodiversity Action Plan lists and/or nationally scarce/rare). The ecological requirements of all priority species were identified to provide management advice on their conservation (species with similar requirements were grouped into management 'guilds'). It confirmed that 149 priority species require physical disturbance and intensive grazing, whilst 220 require physical disturbance with little or no grazing. Both of these management guilds support the largest number of priority grass heath species, and can be catered for by creating physically disturbed habitats.

Restoring rabbit populations will create disturbed and well-grazed grass heath habitats; however, conservation efforts over the past 30 years have failed to sustain high enough populations long term². An alternative option is create patches of disturbed ground in heathland, arable and forest through a variety of different cultivation and soil removal techniques. This approach is supported by the BBA and experimental studies, which have demonstrated that soil disturbance and soil stripping can encourage early successional, disturbance dependent, species typical of the Brecks³.

Since the publication of the BBA the use of mechanical ground disturbance as a management prescription has expanded across many Brecks grass heaths, funded through government agri-environment schemes, landfill grants and the Heritage Lottery Fund/Breaking New Ground Landscape Partnership ground disturbance project (BNG). Work has focused on the expansion of physically disturbed areas through a variety of different techniques.

Many of the Brecks' important archaeological sites survive well on the remaining areas of heath (particularly when heaths are compared to the adjacent arable land that has experienced intensive agricultural practices since the 1940s). In the early 20th century W.G. Clarke explained 'Few districts in England are more attractive to the archaeologists than Breckland' and described many of the significant heathland features: prehistoric flint artefacts, Neolithic and post medieval flint mines (including Grime's Graves), prehistoric burial mounds, Iron Age/medieval linear earthworks, Roman settlements, and warren and parish boundaries. To this list we can add medieval warren lodges, woodland, heath and field boundaries, sheep-fold enclosures and features associated with nineteenth and twentieth century military training.

¹ Dolman *et al*, 2010

² Dolman *et al*, 2010, p.21

³ Dolman & Sutherland, 1994, Pedley *et al*, 2013

The BBA suggested that ‘archaeological interests need to be resolved without requiring a separate impact assessment for each operation and site’⁴. Natural England and the Forestry Commission have raised the need for a strategic approach in discussions with Norfolk County Council’s Historic Environment Service on a number of occasions. The *Historic Environment Opportunity Map* aims to address these needs.

The Historic Environment Opportunities Map

Purpose

The purpose of the *Historic Environment Opportunities Map* is to provide initial best practice advice to land managers designing physical ground disturbance projects in the Brecks. It is hoped all relevant land managers will refer to it at the very start of their project development work. Providing the first phase of advice through the *Historic Environment Opportunities Map* should help speed up project development and support projects to follow Natural England guidance⁵. It should also reduce the risk of surprises and delays.

Coverage

The *Historic Environment Opportunities Map* covers all heaths where ground disturbance works are likely to take place across the BNG area. These areas were identified by the wide range of partners involved in BNG, including Natural England, the RSPB, the Norfolk Wildlife Trust, the Forestry Commission, Plantlife, Butterfly Conservation and Norfolk and Suffolk County Councils.

Where possible opportunities have been taken to extend the *Historic Environment Opportunities Map* beyond the BNG area. Areas outside the BNG area include selected heaths in the wider Brecks and parts of Salthouse Heath (north Norfolk).

Downloading

The *Historic Environment Opportunities Map* GIS files are available to download as GIS files at <http://www.heritage.norfolk.gov.uk/teaching-resources-1>.

They are provided in both MapInfo and ArcGIS format.

MapInfo users should ensure they download all five linked files (.dat, .id, .ind, .map and .tab). Without all five files, the *Historic Environment Opportunities Map* will not work.

ArcGIS users should download all four linked files (.dbf, .prj, .shp, and .shx). Without all four files, the *Historic Environment Opportunities Map* will not work.

Information and advice provided

The GIS files include geographic information and an associated table. There are over 400 mapped areas (each of which has a Unique Identifier or *UID* – the first column) and fifteen columns of data.

⁴ Dolman *et al*, 2010, pp. 122–125, 152–154 & 188–189

⁵ Hawley *et al*, 2008

The initial advice for each area is provided within the GIS files as a *Historic Environment Opportunities Statement* (the second column). Throughout four statements have been used:

1. No historic environment consultation required
2. Commission a rapid identification survey and consult local authority historic environment/archaeological service
3. Consultation with local authority historic environment/archaeological service required
4. No ground disturbance permitted

All the other columns provide the background information that was used to assign each *Historic Environment Opportunities Statement*. For every area these include the principal reason the statement was assigned, information on land-use from the late 18th century through to the 1990s, Historic Environment Record record numbers and a rating of historic environment significance. If land managers would like to know about historic environment features in a particular area they can visit <http://www.heritage.norfolk.gov.uk/simple-search> (for areas in Norfolk) or <https://heritage.suffolk.gov.uk/simple-search> (for areas in Suffolk) and search for the relevant HER record/s.

Next steps

Thematic mapping

Historic Environment Opportunities Map GIS files have been produced so land managers can create thematic maps based on the *Historic Environment Opportunities Statement* data. Colour coding each area by *Historic Environment Opportunities Statement* helps makes the initial advice stand out. Although users can choose any colours for their thematic map, the enclosed example map uses a 'traffic light' system - green for statement 1, yellow for statement 2, orange for statement 3 and red for statement 4.

No historic environment consultation required

If a land manager is working in an area where the *Historic Environment Opportunities Statement* is 'No historic environment consultation required' they should feel confident to develop their ground disturbance project without contacting the local authority historic environment/archaeological service.

Commission a rapid identification survey and consult local authority historic environment/archaeological service

Areas with this *Historic Environment Opportunities Statement* have not been surveyed by an archaeologist before but have high potential to contain archaeological earthworks. To avoid causing damage to previously unrecorded earthworks, the land manager should commission an archaeological contractor or a BNG trained volunteer to carry out a rapid identification survey. This survey should identify all visible earthworks. The results of the survey and full details of proposed

ground disturbance work⁶ should be provided to the local authority historic environment/archaeological service, who will then provide advice on next steps.

Consultation with local authority historic environment/archaeological service required

Areas with this *Historic Environment Opportunities Statement* have not been surveyed by an archaeologist before and have high potential to contain significant archaeological remains (including buried deposits or structures). Full details of proposed ground disturbance work⁷ should be provided to the local authority historic environment/archaeological service, who will then provide advice on next steps.

No ground disturbance permitted

Areas with this *Historic Environment Opportunities Statement* are known to contain archaeological earthworks and/or buried archaeological remains. In some cases these are legally protected as designated Scheduled Monuments. Ground disturbance works should be planned elsewhere to avoid harming archaeological remains.

Contact details of local authority historic environment/archaeological service

For advice on areas in Norfolk contact Historic Environment Service, Norfolk County Council, Union House, Gressenhall, Dereham, Norfolk NR20 4DR, hep@norfolk.gov.uk, 01362 869278, in the first instance.

For advice on areas in Suffolk contact Suffolk County Council Archaeological Service, Bury Resource Centre, Hollow Road, Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk, IP32 7AY, archaeology@suffolk.gov.uk, 01284 741230, in the first instance.

Acknowledgments

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⁶ Details provided must include the techniques proposed, the depth of disturbance and a map/map showing where each technique is due to be applied.

⁷ Details provided must include the techniques proposed, the depth of disturbance and a map/map showing where each technique is due to be applied.

Wildlife Trust), Tim Pankhurst (Plantlife), Sharon Hearle (Butterfly Conservation), Paul Gould (Thetford Golf Course), Nick Dickson (BNG), Neil Featherstone (Future Environomics), Dominic Ash (Defence Infrastructure Organisation), Scott Perkin (Norfolk and Suffolk Biodiversity Partnership), Heidi Smith (Norfolk FWAG), Ed Stocker, Martin Horlock, Xenia Kyriakou (Norfolk County Council), the late Colin Pendleton (Suffolk County Council) and Brian Cushion (freelance archaeological surveyor).

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Rapid identification surveys carried out by volunteers trained as part of the BNG ground disturbance project have played important role in developing the *Historic Environment Opportunities Map*. These volunteers include James Cross, Christine and Colin Lang, Carol Palfreyman, Franziska and David Richards, and Mia Tobbitt.

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Breaking New Ground Historic Environment Opportunities Map

Cranwich Camp

Compiled by Norfolk County Council on 23 January 2017

Scale 1:5000



Union House, Gressenhall, East Dereham, Norfolk, NR20 4DR

