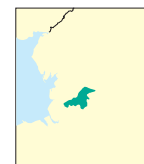


Southern Pennines



Key Characteristics

- Large-scale sweeping landform with an open character created by exposed gritstone moors at an altitude of 400 m - 450 m, deeply trenched by narrow valleys and wooded cloughs.
- Mosaic of mixed moorland and blanket bog with enclosed pasture of varying qualities at lower elevations, largely defined by dry stone walls.
- Valuable wildlife habitats on the open moorland and the moorland fringe including semi-natural boggy mires, acid flashes and wooded cloughs.
- Reservoirs common throughout the area.
- Densely populated valley bottoms with stone buildings extending along valley sides set against the backdrop of the moorland tops.
- Gritstone towns centred around key features of industrial heritage such as textile mills and other industrial development mainly in the valleys but with a group of older settlements on the moorland fringe.
- Main road, rail and canal routes located along valley bottoms. Historic packhorse trails traversing the exposed moorland tops.
- Intrusive features, including windfarm developments, numerous transmission masts, overhead power lines and sandstone, gritstone and clay quarries, mainly on the fringe of the area.
- Extensive views from elevated locations in all directions.

Landscape Character

The area lies between the northern boundary of the Peak District National Park and the southern boundary of the Yorkshire Dales National Park. It lies between the great conurbations of Lancashire and Greater Manchester to the west and West Yorkshire to the East. Over seven million people live within an hour's drive of its centre and the

conurbations generate increasing demands for transport, mineral extraction, power transmission and generation and urban encroachment as well as an intense pressure for recreation, sport and tourism.



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Dense settlements, such as Haslingden, extend up the valleys. The proximity of the population to the surrounding uplands is a distinctive feature of the area, putting it under heavy recreational pressure.

This is a large-scale sweeping landscape of exposed upland moorland and pasture. The area shares many characteristics with the Bowland Fells and the Dark Peak but the evidence of man's intrusion into this landscape has removed the sense of unspoilt wilderness which distinguishes the other regions.

Agriculture in the majority of this area is limited to sheep grazing on upland pasture with some beef and a little small-scale dairy farming in the valley bottoms. The production of eggs, chicken meat and pig products is also of considerable importance in some areas. The farming economy in the area is unique - the majority of the holdings are small and are worked on a part-time basis. In landscape terms this is reflected in small fields defined by stone walls and post and wire fencing often in poor condition which suggests marginal economic viability. There is a dynamic relationship between different types of moorland vegetation with areas of heather and grassland fluctuating in response to changing management regimes. In the north east, the valleys of the Aire and the Wharfe are bounded in places by steeply sloping sides with extensive areas of landslip

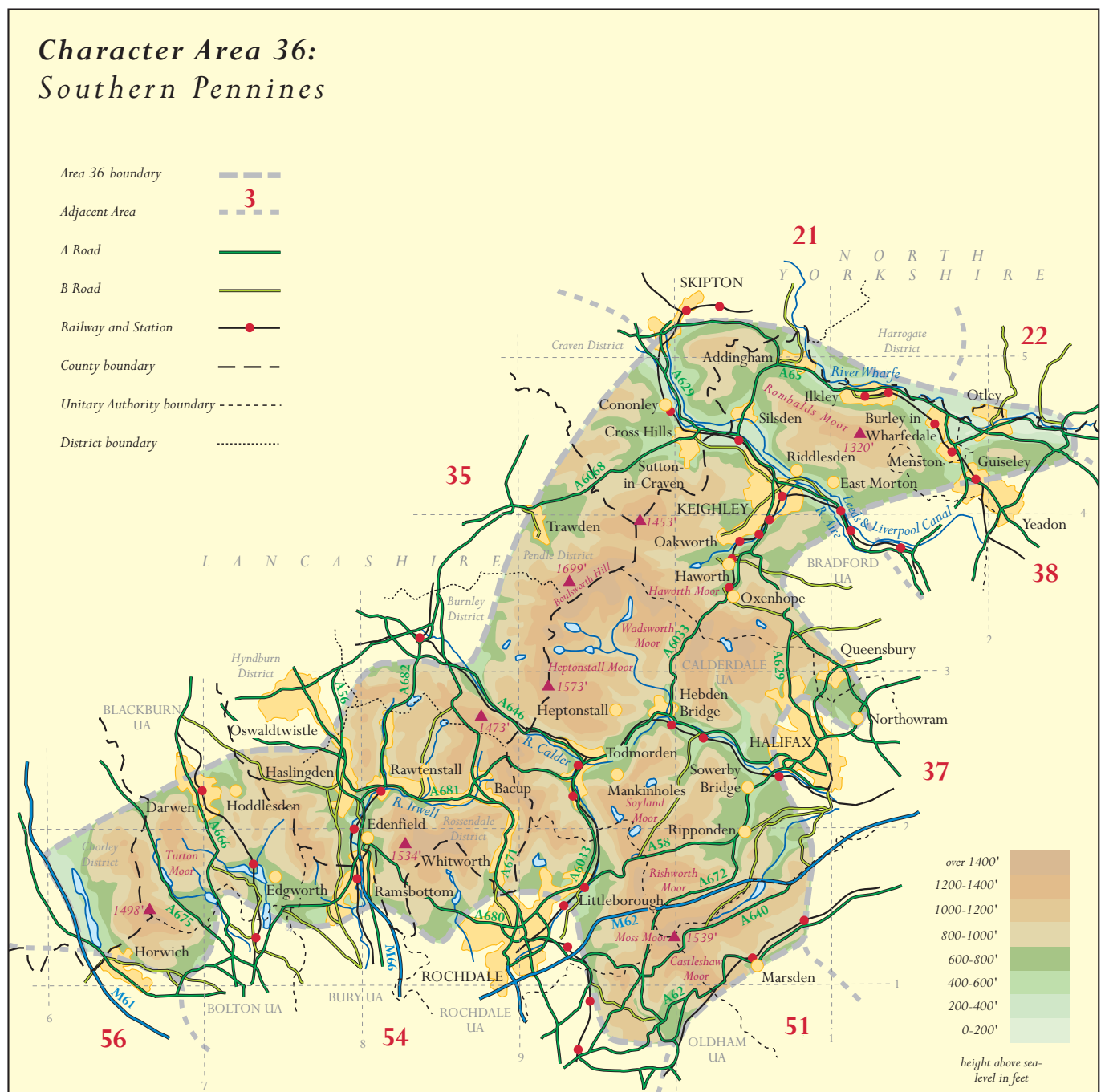


which support permanent grassland, sheep grazing and some dairying - examples include Ilkley which is between Keighley and Bingley.

This area is a valuable water catchment area and, as such, contains a large number of reservoirs which form a major contribution to the overall landscape character.

The moorland plateau is dissected by three main river systems which drain eastward - the Aire, the Colne and the Calder. The valleys of the Roach and the Thame drain the western and south-western parts of the area. The valleys themselves are heavily populated and contain the major communication routes with the exception of the main trans-Pennine route, the M62, which crosses the tops between Huddersfield and Rochdale. In general, settlements have been contained by the harsh topography of the steep valley sides. However, the confluence of the Worth and Aire valleys is associated with a

gently sloping alluvial fan, raised above the level of the floodplain, which has allowed the town of Keighley to expand rapidly and become a large sprawling conurbation. The moorland plateau affords extensive views across these valleys and towards the plains of Lancashire and the low-lying conurbations of the woollen towns in Yorkshire. This further reduces the sense of isolation associated with other upland moorland locations. There are many other man-made influences which detract from the natural beauty of this area. Quarrying is, in the main, restricted to the moorland fringe with the exception of the heavily quarried valley at Whitworth. Other intrusions include wind farms, transmitter masts and, in several places particularly to the west of Bradford and above Bacup, large spates of 400KV overhead power lines which become prominent features visible from long distances. Despite this there is a sense of grandeur and spaciousness to be found in these moorland tops.





The irregular field patterns, degraded stone walls, narrow valleys and wooded cloughs of Holme Chapel are characteristic of the area. The distant wind turbines are another example of man's activity within this working landscape.

The area has a strong industrial heritage associated with the textile, engineering and manufacturing industries. It is, in fact, the seat of the woollen and cotton textile industry and the landscape reflects the transformation from cottage industries to much larger commercial industries. Indeed, the central feature of the majority of the towns and villages which line the valley floors are the textile mills which dominate the urban skyline and dwarf the stone terraces which radiate from them. The smoke blackened terraces with their sloping rooflines extend up the valley sides to the moorland edge.

Physical Influences

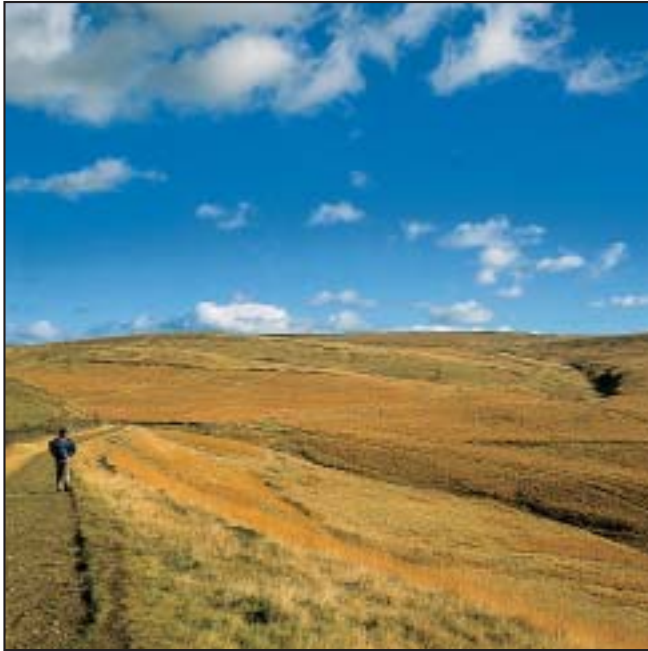
In the middle of the region, around Haslingden and Ramsbottom, thick, coarse-grained sandstones ('gritstone') are generally horizontal and separated by softer mudstone and siltstone beds. This creates a terraced landscape of plateaux and interlocking escarpments corresponding to the layers of sandstone and mudstone. Isolated beds of sandstone also form mesa-shaped hills across the area. The region is cut by numerous faults and has several deeply-trenched glacial erosion features such as Cliviger Gorge. To the south of the area, as it passes between Rochdale and Huddersfield, the

Pennines are at their narrowest. The slopes to the west are steeper than those to the east. Accordingly, the scarps on the west are less populated and elevated. One of the most prominent of these escarpments is Blackstone Edge, west of Huddersfield. The escarpment is formed by Kinderscout Grit and was referred to by Defoe as the English Andes. Between here and the western edge of the Yorkshire coalfields there is a succession of similar crag-capped edges running parallel to the main valleys such as the Colne and Calder Valleys.

To the north-east of the area the distinctive long ridge of Millstone Grit, Rombalds Moor, is separated from the core of the Southern Pennines by the valley of the river Aire. Glacial till occurs within the Aire Valley but is largely absent on the upland areas of Rombalds Moor and Skipton Moor. The valley is relatively wide and flat and the bottom is enriched with alluvium. During the last ice-age glacial moraine ridges blocked drainage of the valley forming a series of glacial lakes, the deposits of which are preserved beneath the alluvium.

Familiar features of this region are waterfalls. The alternate bedding of the hard grit and the softer shales promote their development - examples include Lumb Falls near Hebden

Bridge and the falls in Marsden Clough at Holmbridge. Other waterfalls, such as Dolly Folly near Meltham, are created where a fault line crosses the valley bringing grit against shale and resulting in massive gritstone walls over 30 feet high.



MIKE WILLIAMS/COUNTRYSIDE COMMISSION

The sweeping landform of Worsthorne Moor is characteristic of the uplands of the South Pennines.

Historical and Cultural Influences

The transformation of the landscape in the 18th and 19th centuries, as a result of the switch from handloom weaving to the factory system, has left a legacy in the area. Villages, enclosures, commons, packhorse trails and canals are preserved in a landscape where convincing glimpses of a much older, prehistoric past can also be discerned. Historically, access to the area was poor with little more than packhorse routes traversing the moorland tops. However, there is evidence that a Roman road cuts across the moors, west of Haslingden, linking Manchester to Ribchester. The Wharfedale and Airedale valleys have served as important routeways across the Pennines from the earliest times.

Agriculture based on sheep and cattle has always been an important activity. Sheep grazing on the moorland commons was ad hoc and fluctuated, in response to climatic and economic changes, resulting in abandoned stone farmsteads and irregular, degraded stone wall enclosures dotted across the plateaux. Many of the abandoned homesteads were also the result of deliberate depopulation by the early water companies. In contrast, the relatively better quality land to the north-east gave rise to extensive Parliamentary enclosure which has resulted in strong regular patterns of medium-sized walled fields on the lower plateaux and slopes. The dramatic landscape of the region

has attracted the attention of several literary figures. The most notable of these were the Bronte sisters who lived in Haworth and used the surrounding landscape as a setting for many of their novels such as *Jane Eyre* and *Wuthering Heights*. Earlier it impressed Daniel Defoe and, more recently, Ted Hughes. The association with the Brontes is a major tourist attraction of the area and many of the road signs are in several languages.

The steep-sided valleys are now densely populated as a result of the rapid expansion of small villages involved in the textile industry. The growth of the textile industry concentrated people into the industrial valleys. Evidence of this changing society is seen by the ruins of isolated farmsteads and cottages on surrounding hillsides. The population of these valleys steadily increased and the expansion of home weaving led to the building of stone cottages with large 'weavers' windows'. The introduction of water power caused the industry to prosper still further in these valleys. The rapid streams provided such power and later supplied the lime-free water needed for other stages in textile manufacture. These settlements are dominated by large mill buildings with chimneys and extensive rows of terraces clinging onto the hillsides. The greatest expansion of the industry took the bulk of the population onto the lower ground further to the east where the valleys open out onto the Coal Measures. The decline of the Lancashire textile industry followed the slump of 1920. Today some mills have found alternative uses but many remain derelict.

The valley sides also bear the scars of extractive industries such as stone quarrying and coal mining at Bacup, Haslingden, Edenfield, Cliviger and in the Aire Valley between Keighley and Bingley. Many have been in operation from the early 18th century.

A result of this industrial expansion has been the establishment of an improved communication network including the East Lancashire Railway, Rochdale Canal and upgraded 'A' roads and bypasses.

Buildings and Settlement

Settlement in the South Pennines is either peripheral to the upland core or strung out along the major valleys that penetrate it. Nodal points at valley junctions are especially important, as at Littleborough, Todmorden, Hebden Bridge and Keighley. There is a fringe of smaller, intermediate settlements at mid height between this outer fringe and the central core. It spreads up the slopes from the major settlements. This mid-height zone is wider in the east of the area than it is in the west thus conforming to the physiography of the area. Construction is predominantly out of local gritstone and in a vernacular style that complements the natural features and contributes to the

overall aesthetic quality of the landscape. The settlement pattern has evolved from a dual economy in which textiles predominated. As textile manufacturing was mechanised, settlements evolved and expanded at sites where power, water at first and then coal, became available.

Small towns, such as Haslingden, Rawtenstall, Bacup, Todmorden and Hebden Bridge, line the deeply incised valleys forming linear bands of development along valley bottoms. These towns are often industrial in origin deriving power from the rivers for the textile industry and exploiting the natural resources for quarrying and mining. The skyline of these settlements is often dominated by the mill chimneys which tower above the small stone terraces. Easily the most dominating tower in the central area of the Southern Pennines is Stoodley Pike. The town of Keighley in the Aire Valley underwent rapid expansion during the 19th and early 20th centuries based on engineering and manufacturing. Because of the gentler topography the town has been able to sprawl out in contrast to the previously mentioned settlements.

Land Cover

This area is predominantly upland heather moorland, acid grassland and rough pasture although some of the heather moor has been lost to grassland in many areas due to changes in management. The effects of enclosure, over-grazing, uncontrolled burning and atmospheric pollution have reduced the once varied vegetation to one dominated by purple moor-grass (*Molina caerulea*), mat-grass (*Nardus stricta*) and cotton grass (*Eriophorum spp.*). The core of the area however supports the mosaic of natural upland habitats which include blanket bogs, heather moor and wet heath which are rare enough to be of European importance.

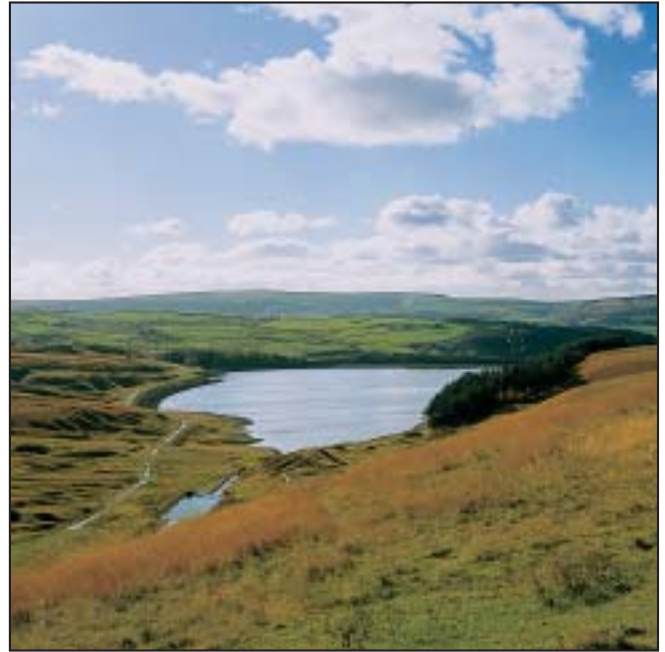
The main agricultural land use is sheep grazing. The field pattern is small to medium and defined by stone walls and post and wire fencing. These are often degraded in many areas. To the east, in Airedale, trees become more frequent than on the uplands and birch and oak are abundant. Much of the land on these lower slopes is improved pasture with well-maintained field boundaries.

The area is an important water catchment area with numerous reservoirs in the head streams of the major river valleys. It is crossed by many drainage channels which feed into these reservoirs, such as at Rivington, Haslingden Grane, Belmont and Entwistle. Woodland in the area is sparse and in the west predominantly comprises 20th century coniferous plantations associated with the reservoirs. In the eastern part of the area there are more 19th century beech and sycamore woods. Occasional wooded cloughs extending to these altitudes are often grazed and in poor condition.

There are many quarries in this area, most of which are abandoned stone quarries, largely covered with vegetation

and grazed by sheep or completely infilled. However, there are several active quarries on the moorland edge at Bacup, Haslingden, Edenfield, towards Cliviger and in the vicinity of Haworth.

The area contains several transmission masts, a 24 turbine windfarm at Cliviger and the 22 turbine windfarm at Ovenden Moor. There are also several country parks at lower elevations developed near reservoirs for example at Lever Park, Jumbles and Ogden.



MIKE WILLIAMS/COUNTRYSIDE COMMISSION

Reservoirs such as Hurstwood, commonly surrounded by coniferous plantations, occur throughout the area. The former coal workings, shown to the left of the photograph, are further evidence of the area's strong historical links with industry.

The Changing Countryside

- Fluctuating transitional moorland edge due to conversion and reversion of rough grazing and pasture.
- Over-grazing of areas of common land by large operators.
- Major shifts in land ownership as farms are taken over by non-farmers.
- Conversion of barns and derelict farmsteads.
- Introduction of windfarms and cellular phone/radio transmitter masts.
- Decline in the textile industry and the evolution and transformation of the industrial base in the valley settlement.
- Dereliction or conversion of many mills for alternative use.
- Urban fringe pressure around larger conurbations resulting in erosion of paths, fly-tipping and disturbance to wildlife.

- Growth of recreation as a major land use bringing a potential for erosion and increased car borne traffic.
- Development of a by-pass network which is incomplete and results in bottlenecks on unimproved roads.
- The significant pressure for improved access to this area has resulted in proposals for the M65 cross-Pennine link. However this proposal is on hold but would have a considerable impact upon the landscape character and future development of the area.

Shaping the Future

- The reduction in sheep grazing on open moorlands would increase biodiversity, contribute to landscape character and encourage traditional management of heather moorland.
- The sympathetic conversion of redundant farm and mill buildings should be considered on the edge of urban areas. The retention and reuse of industrial heritage features, particularly mill buildings in valley bottoms, is important.
- The management of marginal farmland, subject to pressures from its urban fringe location, should be addressed.
- The appropriate treatment of redundant quarries should be considered. This might include restoration in sensitive locations or ecological enhancement. These sites may be of geological importance and of scientific or educational value.
- There are opportunities to retain and manage ecologically-rich acid flushes, wooded cloughs and existing woodlands. There is scope for the creation of native woodland.
- The retention and restoration of traditional stone wall field boundaries and fences is important.



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The north east of the character area, such as the area around Whitley Head, has relatively better quality land which gave rise to extensive Parliamentary enclosure. This has resulted in strong regular patterns of medium-sized, walled fields on the lower plateaux and slopes.

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Glossary

cloughs: ravines; steep valleys