



# *Between the Lines*

*Land of Oak & Iron Mapping Project Newsletter*

*October 2018 (rev)*

In this first edition of *Between the Lines* we introduce the Mapping Project, and talk about some of the maps that we will access in the course of the Project. There are a few questions for you to ponder, and a little challenge.

## **Introduction to the Mapping Project**

Land of Oak & Iron provides a vehicle for local people and visitors to explore the landscape; to understand it, and enjoy what it contains. Emphasis is on the heritage of the area; particularly its long, wide ranging industrial past.

Mapping is a tool to help people access and discover the area. This may be as a user of the information or, for volunteers such as yourselves; a journey of sharing, exploration and discovery. Our aim is to have a resource available to all, on-line and in Heritage Centres.

The Land of Oak & Iron area currently encompasses the catchment of the Derwent from the Derwent Reservoir to the Tyne, where it extends westward from Blaydon to a little beyond Prudhoe.

The Mapping Project will encompass a slightly larger area. We are currently setting up the basic structures for the map and project. Through 2019 we will focus on the landscape and industrial heritage:

the **OAK** from our woodlands; which was used to build sailing ships for Royal Navy and;

the **IRON**; used for many things, including nails used in the building of those same ships and swords for the army, as well as cooking pots and tools for early industry and farming use.

We will be looking at how the mills, mines and quarries that provided the raw materials, shaped

villages, and the transport links that developed to move goods from where they were made to docks on the Tyne for their onward journey.

Initially we will look at the period from 1690 (when Crowley established his Ironworks in the Winlaton area\*) to the present day.

Recognising that the area now has an important leisure and recreational use, we will include some key information to satisfy that need; such as main cycle and walking paths, wildlife centres, and locations where refreshments can be found.

In 2020, the depth of content will continue to expand and we will start to explore from 1690 back in time to when the Romans were present in our landscape. After that we will start pushing the boundaries to discover traces that remain of the earliest inhabitants.

We are providing a start point; we will guide and support you as the project grows. In time this will become your project, where you will shape its future direction to create a legacy for current and future generations to enjoy.

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\*M.W.Flint in *Men of Iron* (1962) identifies Winlaton as the location of Crowley's first ironworks in the Derwent Valley. The original issue of this newsletter stated Winlaton Mill, however, this is a topic for further study and debate.

## Let's talk about maps

While we get the practicalities of the mapping project sorted, you might wish to get started for yourself. First, have a look at some maps.

The website of the National Library of Scotland mapping archive can be found at:

<https://maps.nls.uk/geo/find>

In the menu box on the left side of the screen you'll find boxes with scroll down options to select a map series. Have a look at the options – the most interesting being the 1st edition six inch maps and those of the First Series 1:25000 maps, which we will be using as the basis for our mapping project.

Choosing any series opens a map window with small red or blue squares which enlarge as you zoom in (using your mouse's scrolling wheel or the +/- buttons near the top left of the map pane). Enlarge sufficiently on the Newcastle area and you can click in an individual grid square to see a small version of it at the top right of your screen. This gives you the name/grid square of the individual map image. Click on the thumbnail map and you'll see the original sheet in a new window. You can zoom in very close on these.

The eight sheets on which we will concentrate our mapping exercise are:

NY95 NY96 NZ05 NZ06 NZ15 NZ16 NZ25 NZ26

The maps don't have the full colour range of the later 1:25000 ranges – Pathfinder and Explorer – but the detail is superb and, crucially, they contain the historic township boundaries which are so important for the study. It's worth comparing the detail with the 1st edition six inch maps, which contain some material not found on any later series.

As we transfer information from the 1:25000 base maps onto tracing sheets and then onto our own digital maps, we'll need to think carefully about symbols, line widths and colours to make sure they are consistent across all maps, and easy to use/read/understand. Green is obvious for woods – but what shade? One for ancient woods and another for plantations? And how do we tell them apart? What names do we put on? Just historic townships... or also their modern equivalents and names of local interest? Where to start and stop? We have some ideas on all these matters, but you may have better thoughts – twenty brains will make

for a more interesting and richer experience, and better data.

If you are interested in some of the underlying realities of the Land of Oak & Iron, it's worth having a look at the British Geological Survey to see what rocks we live on: <http://mapapps.bgs.ac.uk/geologyofbritain/home.html>.

They can help to explain why the valley is not only an area of traditional pastoral farming but also an area of industry

There's also a fascinating website called Magic: <https://magic.defra.gov.uk/MagicMap.aspx>

In a series of interactive layers, not unlike those which we'll be developing with the mapping project, you can see habitats and the distribution of species and a wealth of other information, scalable to a high degree of detail. Some information, such as ancient woodland classification, is a little suspect, and we'll need to address that in our study. In general, though, it's a fascinating source of information about our landscape.

One of the most useful resources now freely available is satellite images. Try Bing maps, on which you can locate yourself with the Ordnance Survey map and then switch to an aerial view: <https://www.bing.com/maps>

Here's a quick challenge: have a look at the aerial view of Newlands; the farmstead just west of the River Derwent at Ebchester. Can you see the remains of medieval broad ridge and furrow fields, still visible in the surrounding fields, with their characteristic strips in the shape of a reversed S? What formed these shapes? These remains of ancient farming are not mapped (at least, not in this area); but we can start to map them using aerial images and a little local knowledge.

### Coming up in December:

Our first full mapping meeting will be held on 12th December 2018, 19:00 to 21:00.

Venue: Land of Oak & Iron Heritage Centre, Winlaton Mill

Please register to attend [here](#).

