



IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF  
**Peter Orlando  
Hutchinson**

A community heritage project  
2010 - 2013

Final Report and Evaluation



## In the footsteps of Peter Orlando Hutchinson

### A community heritage project

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This project has drawn on the work of the little known Victorian antiquary Peter Orlando Hutchinson (1819 -1897), who resided in Sidmouth during the mid 1800s. Hutchinson studied historical features of the landscape extensively such as ancient hill forts, tumuli, burial mounds and quarrying sites. His work provides a detailed and fascinating account of the landscape at the time and an ideal resource around which to base a community heritage project. This report provides a brief summary of the project and its achievements.





# Final Report and Evaluation

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## Acknowledgements and thanks

The success of any project lies in the hands of the team that make it happen; as H.E. Luccock put it,

*“No one can whistle a symphony. It takes a whole orchestra.”*

First thanks must go to the main funders of the ‘orchestra’; Heritage Lottery Fund, Defra, the Sid Vale Association (Keith Owen Fund), East Devon District Council and Devon County Council.

Secondly we must thank the various conductors of the orchestra, in this case the Steering Group, the AONB team and lead volunteers/actors - in particular Phil Planel and Pete Youngman, Martin Smith, Jill Cobby, Barbara Farquharson, Cressida Whitton, Nigel Hyman, Bob Symes, John Draisey, Ron Woodcock, John Rees, Jenny Moon and Mike Green and for the web site, project Cosmic

And thirdly we must thank the audience and special guests .... all our volunteers, Royal Albert Memorial Museum and all those who participated and engaged with us; after all, the real enjoyment in performing is thrill of the audience participation...

**Chris Woodruff** - Manager, East Devon AONB Partnership

## Project Background

The successful three year Parishscapes Project (2007-2010) run by the East Devon AONB Partnership established that there was an appetite in the community for historical and archaeological projects.

The source material that this precursor project made widely available, tithe maps and apportionments in particular produced valuable insights into landscape change in the AONB. The investigations of the Parishscapes project developed our appreciation of the visually diverse content and accurate descriptions that were contained in the diaries and watercolours of the Sidmouth antiquary, Peter Orlando Hutchinson.

Thus the seeds for the 'In the Footsteps of Peter Orlando Hutchinson Project' (POH) were sown. Hutchinson's painstaking observations about both the landscape in his own, Victorian, period and his work to understand earlier historic and prehistoric landscapes provided an ideal vehicle for understanding the perpetually changing landscape, the motor for change in various historical periods (the enclosure of the commons for example) and the results of change. This is particularly valuable at a time when many visitors to the countryside, and even it appears some landscape professionals, believe that there is a fixed past landscape we should attempt to return to, whereas in reality is the landscape has always been in flux and in a state of 'becoming'.

POH has long had a small and dedicated group of admirers. His diaries and watercolours have been edited by Jeremy Butler in two handsome volumes (2000 and 2011, Halsgrove) whilst Sidmouth Museum has curated a small permanent exhibition concerning him. However, it is true to say that his work was not well known, even locally, and deserved to be more widely appreciated, both by local people and visitors to the area.

It was also felt that volunteers, and particularly the skills base and enthusiasm of the lead volunteers who had participated in Parishscapes, could be accommodated within the new project and would provide a useful legacy for this now completed project. The tried and tested management of the earlier project and the wider contribution of the entire AONB team in delivering the key project outputs also provided a secure foundation for this new community work.

But, getting the project underway was a challenge. It needed some helpful ingredients and good fortune. The conviction and support of the Sid Vale Association and the strengthening of relationship with their museum staff; the belief from East Devon District Council that heritage and culture can also have an economic value; the decision to focus our effort away from what felt like an increasingly complex European funding programme to the already tried and tested Heritage Lottery Fund. Combined with the wider support of Devon County Council Historic Environment Services, The Branscombe Project and local volunteers and individuals, these jigsaw pieces slotted into place to provide the platform for our first steps to be taken in our travels in the footsteps of Peter Orlando Hutchinson.

## Structure and Delivery

Although there was a gap of several months between the end of Parishscapes and the beginning of the POH project there was an immediate sense of continuity when permission was given to start in the summer of 2010. The Parishscapes Officer successfully applied to lead the new project and the steering committee was broadly of the same composition: Jill Copley (volunteer and PhD. Student at Exeter University), John Draisey ( County Archivist who stayed with us into his retirement), Cressida Whitton (Devon Historic Environment Service), Martin Smith (lead volunteer) and Barbara Farquharson (Branscombe Project), who were joined initially by Bob Symes then later by Nigel Hyman (Sidmouth Museum Committee) and Pete Youngman (East Devon AONB Project Officer). Successful partnerships were renewed, in particular with the Devon Record Office (keeper of the POH diaries and watercolours) in digitising a new archive. Pete Youngman was able to draw on his long experience of work and contacts with key landowners and land managers to deliver the on-site components of the new project - a much more important aspect of the new project. New partnerships were forged with organisations such as Project Cosmic to make the POH archive accessible on-line. Many Parishscapes volunteers wished to be involved in the new project, whether to transcribe the POH diaries or to work in all weathers on-site, clearing vegetation from barrows and other features which had first been mapped and described by Hutchinson.



## Partnership Working

Partnership working was an important component of the POH project which had not been such a strong feature of the preceding Parishscapes Project. As regards on site work, it ranged from generous short-term agreements to use land for events, at Blackbury Castle, for example, where we could not use the monument itself for our Iron Age days, to long-term agreements to enter land for walks (private landowners and estate managers, but also the National Trust, the Forestry Commission and Devon Historic Environment Service).



*Location of sites included in the project*

In addition to the presentation of school work, perhaps the most fruitful partnership was that established with several partners to provide a week-long celebration of Hutchinson in late June 2013 in the very environment which nurtured him - Sidmouth. The elegant Kennaway House provided the venue for the POH exhibition and a lecture by the county archaeologist; Sidmouth Museum put on wonderful exhibition of hitherto unseen POH artefacts loaned by the Royal Albert Memorial Museum (RAMM), Exeter, and also organised POH themed town walks; the Sidmouth Amateur Dramatic Society put on two plays about POH in the Parish Church, the very locale of his own real life 'leading role' in the Tractarian dispute which surrounded the rebuilding of the church. All three of these locations are quite literally only a stone's throw from Hutchinson's home in Coburg Terrace, where the medieval chancel of Sidmouth Church was re-erected by POH in his appropriately named home: the Old Chancel.



*Presentation evening of the pupils work from the Changing Landscapes school site visits*



*Volunteer work parties and guided walks*

## Engaging the Community

Importantly, POH emerged as a very useful vehicle for studying the historic landscape and landscape change, and not simply as a portrayal of a likeable but eccentric Victorian figure. In this work, the Bronze Age Landscape occupied pride of place and there are now dozens of individuals and organisations who are aware that the Farway, Gittisham, Broad Down Complex is one of the richest Bronze Age ritual and funerary landscapes in the South West. Hitherto this understanding has been largely the reserve of archaeologists and knowledgeable historians.

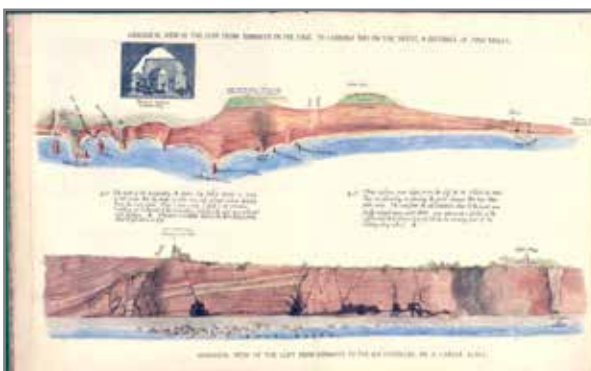
<b>Volunteer activity</b>	<b>No of days</b>	<b>In kind value (£)</b>
practical volunteer days <i>(unskilled)</i>	240	12,000
transcribing <i>(skilled)</i>	270	40,500



English Heritage recognised the work we have done with our volunteers and are in full agreement that the best way to protect our heritage is to develop a feeling of community ownership and so awarded the AONB Partnership a commendation in the Heritage Angel awards for its work in this regard.

## Making archive resources more readily accessible

The impact of uploading thousands of evocative images and diary pages from the POH diaries, his watercolour collection and the 1st volume of his unpublished History of Sidmouth onto the AONB website should not be underestimated. Our partners in this endeavour were the Devon Record Office, Project Cosmic and our lead volunteer, Martin Smith.



*Examples from Hutchinson's diary and watercolour collection*

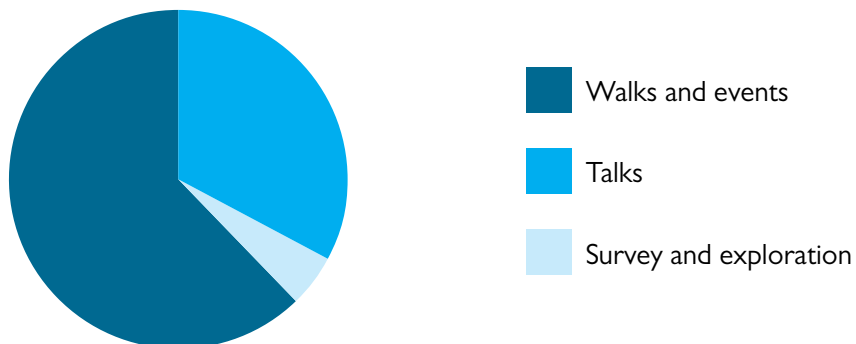
## Engaging the Community

The advantage of the 'In the steps' part of the project title was that we could follow POH through the landscape and monitor what had changed, though POH was well aware of changes which had occurred even in his lifetime (the changing face of Jacob's Ladder; the rusements and re-routing of roads due to coastal erosion; the enclosure of common land). These changes have been a common theme throughout all our events.



Sidmouth college field trip, High Peak

### Helping people learn about their Heritage: Engagement activities





*Village exhibition with RAMM*

Sometimes, however, it was the POH approach rather than his finds, features or sites that guided the project. For example oral history and the interviewing of older members of the farming community revealed the existence, and led to subsequent re-location and re-erection, of a lost standing stone which POH could not have possibly known about as it was only 'found' by the action of deeper ploughing in the 1950's. The stone was re-erected by the Donkey Sanctuary, an example of the sort of ad-hoc partnerships that accompanied much of the project's work and are too frequent to mention.



*Standing stone at the Donkey Sanctuary*

On site work by volunteers, backed up by professional machine operated cutting tools where necessary, not only freed sites from vegetation and root systems which would eventually damage important monuments, but allowed them to be studied and surveyed with professional archaeological surveys led by Hazel Riley, at East Hill, Farway and Ball Hill; The latter survey being part of our volunteer training programme. Geophysical survey was also commissioned at Farway Castle and Mutter's Moor and an environmental survey was undertaken at Farway Castle.



*Survey work at Mutter's Moor*

Volunteers succeeded in finding the exact locations from which Hutchinson painted many of his iconic views and took GIS readings which provided fixed points from which photographs could be taken and watercolours painted work led by Northleigh Art Group.



*Hutchinson's watercolour of High Peak and contemporary photograph (2012)*

In an effort to encourage people to consider artistic styles when painting the landscape, two professional artists Sandy MacFadyen and Victoria Goodman were also commissioned to paint two well known Hutchinson views (High Peak and Sidbury Castle from Core Hill respectfully) in their own styles. This allowed direct comparison with Hutchinsons work and individuals perception of the view. These images created much discussion at the Exhibition at Kennaway House.

The project, like the landscape, evolved through time with outputs changing and new outputs emerging. Unexpected outputs that either could not have been envisaged or, in the case of one of them, may have been considered to be too ambitious, were achieved.

The unexpected outputs were:

**Transcription of 2000 POH diary pages.** The diligent copying of every word of Hutchinson's swirly handwriting into an online document has made this fascinating record easily searchable for specific references. The team of 12 volunteers who completed the task over two years all found they had learnt something about the life and times of POH in carrying out this painstaking work. This activity offered a different mechanism for volunteers to engage with the project giving them a worthwhile and satisfying experience.



POH diary page 1839

**The Bronze Age walk.** Although liaison work with landowners and volunteer clearance of Bronze Age sites had established that three areas of Farway-Gittisham Common were appropriate for guided walks, it was only through being present in the landscape that it eventually became clear that with a bit of extra clearance, we could link up these three discrete areas to constitute a linear walk from the little car park at the head of the Roncombe Valley to the Hare and Hounds pub. And so the Bronze Age walk saw the light of day and has now been travelled by several hundred well-shod feet, over some quite difficult terrain, most of which ended up supporting the local economy at the Hare and Hounds.

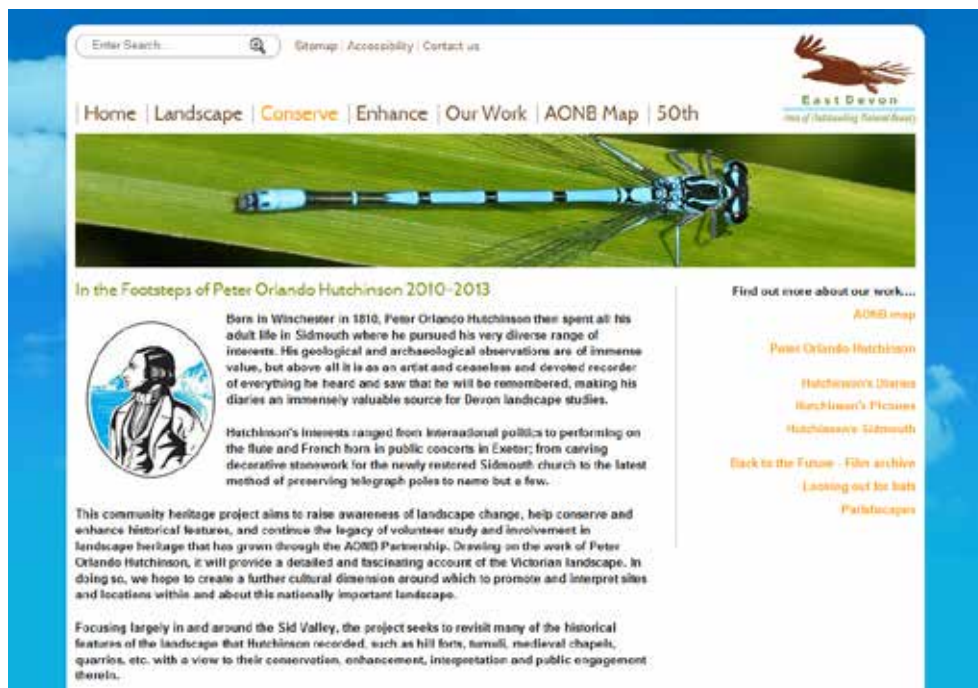


Volunteers clearing vegetation on Mutters Moor

## The Legacy

The high level of volunteer engagement and the confidence that this helped build are assets which should not be allowed to diminish and which should be built upon. Some specific events have proved very popular and should also be perpetuated. The Annual Conference has proven very popular over the last 6 years of projects as has the annual Heritage Week established by this project. And annual walks over Sidbury Castle and the afore mentioned Bronze Age walk. The on-site interpretation work at Blackbury Castle where English Heritage (EH), the site's owners, preferred to update themselves is to follow by way of legacy. We worked closely with EH, supplying them with information regarding POH and we have produced a leaflet, to be available on-site, which will tell the Blackbury story in more detail and add further to the visitor experience.

The development of a virtual online trail, providing information on many of the sites covered by the project will provide further opportunity for public engagement, awareness raising and future initiatives.



The project website contains a huge resource for a wide audience see [www.eastdevonaonb.org.uk](http://www.eastdevonaonb.org.uk)



## Independent Evaluation

### **“In the Footsteps of Peter Orlando Hutchinson”**

This qualitative evaluation was carried out independently for East Devon AONB by Jenny Archard from April-July 2013, as the “In the Footsteps of Peter Orlando Hutchinson” project was drawing to a close. The focus of the evaluation was capturing the experiences and comments of those involved during the life of the project, so that any lessons can be learned and ideas taken forward.

*‘Involving people in looking at the landscape first-hand and the way it has changed... it has opened people’s eyes to the way it has changed and how we can study that’. (Steering Group Member)*

### **The Evaluation Process**

In the application for funding to the Heritage Lottery Fund, the project was described thus:

“In the Footsteps of Peter Orlando Hutchinson” aims to raise awareness of landscape change, help conserve and enhance historical features and continue the legacy of volunteer study and involvement in landscape heritage that has grown through the AONB Partnership. We will draw on the recorded accounts of the Victorian antiquarian, Peter Orlando Hutchinson, who resided in Sidmouth during the mid 1800’s and provided a detailed and fascinating account of the landscape around him at that time.

In doing so, we hope to create a further cultural dimension around which to promote and interpret sites and locations within and about this nationally important landscape. The project will seek to revisit many of the historical features of the landscape that Hutchinson recorded such as ancient hill forts, tumuli, burial mounds, orchards and quarrying sites with a view to their conservation, enhancement, interpretation and public engagement therein.

This evaluation focuses on people’s experiences of and comments on the project as it was coming to a close in the summer of 2013. People were asked to comment on what they thought had worked and what hadn’t worked so well. They were asked how it had helped themselves and others to gain a deeper understanding of their heritage and about the impact on people’s ability to access their heritage. Some also commented the legacy the project will leave and ideas for further work.

It was carried out using open questions through interviews, conference evaluations and email questions to participants, as well as reading background documents from the project. Twelve people were interviewed, including the entire project Steering Group. Twenty-two people were emailed, including teachers at three of the schools involved in the project. At the last of the three annual conferences, participants were invited to complete an evaluation that asked questions about the project as a whole; thirteen completed forms were received.

## Evaluation of Project Delivery and Management

*What worked well: The factors which made the project successful?*

### **The Team and the Steering Group**

The project was managed overall by Phil Planel, Heritage Project Officer recruited for the work, who was supported by Pete Youngman the AONB Project's Officer who chaired Steering Group meetings and Chris Woodruff, the AONB Manager. Volunteers, Participants and Steering Group members described how well this team works at supporting people in being involved and in creating and carrying out such novel projects.

The whole team seems to have supported the project very well, even when there were things to be worked through in the Steering Group or elsewhere in the team.

*'I'm hugely impressed by Chris and the team at the AONB - they are so open to widening their remit...they are very innovative.'* (Steering Group Member)

*"They are a great team, welcoming and friendly and it's a pleasure to work with them'.* (Steering Group Member and Volunteer)

*'I enjoyed going to Steering Group meetings - it was a very happy project, a nice buzz about it. Having a common purpose, a narrow focus and people thinking along the same lines - all contributed in a positive way'* (Steering Group Member)

*'There are always things to be thrashed out, but no problems overall - the Steering Group works through things well.'* (Steering Group Member)

The Project Officer, Phil Planel was specifically noted by many of the volunteers, and appears to have generated a following. Having someone in the team to oversee all the volunteering, co-ordinate and make sure that things were completed was mentioned - as sometimes tasks cannot be finished by volunteers.

*'Phil gets people involved - all those people doing transcriptions, sitting and typing them up for hours! He doesn't make great demands on people and doesn't harass you'.* (Steering Group Member and Volunteer)

*'Phil is good at managing [people] and is laid back'.* (Steering Group Member)

*'Phil handles people very well - people know and trust him'.* (Steering Group Member and Volunteer)

*'Phil has taught me how important it is to get co-operation from people with different backgrounds . He is very modest and he wears his learning lightly.'* (Volunteer)

Phil himself commented, *'People see me, but there is no way I could do this alone - there is the whole project team behind it'.*

## Management and achieving objectives

The Steering Group members commented on how well the objectives had been achieved, and that this has been a very successful project. The work that volunteers put in was considerable and very well regarded by everyone involved.

*'We got the results, the stuff is on the website, people were involved - it succeeded.'*

**(Steering Group Member and Volunteer)**

*'Considering the financial climate, a remarkable amount has been done. All credit to Phil, Pete and the volunteers. It has been very successful - nothing that it failed to do, and it had a real buzz about it.'* **(Steering Group Member)**

*'Having thirteen volunteers working hard to transcribe all those diaries was a fantastic feat.'*

**(Volunteer)**

The main funders [Heritage Lottery Fund] are very happy with what has been achieved, and also see this as a successful project:

*'They've achieved quality activities, have good lines of communications and we have a very good relationships with them. We like to have a good learning mix, and from what I've read this is really good. They have done well to achieve their outputs over the three years.'*

**(Heritage Lottery Fund project officer)**

## The project design

Without being asked, a number of respondents commented on the model or design that this project has created which the AONB can build from, and that others may choose to follow.

*'There are not too many community-based [archeological] projects - they have a good model. This project gives the time needed for the volunteers and people can do a range of things. It is nice for people to have something to do that is relevant to their local heritage. It's a bit of a model scheme.'* **(Steering Group Member)**

*'It's unusual to provide practical opportunities for volunteers to do work on site - the digging and clearing. It can be quite hard to organise. Yet the AONB can do that, they have the required status and can talk to partners - and they can monitor and make sure it is all done well.'* **(Steering Group Member)**

*'I have been very impressed with the POH<sup>1</sup> project. Having spent nineteen years (1978-97) working for the Exmoor NPA I think this is just the sort of project that should be taking place in protected landscapes.'* **(Conference Participant)**

Being focused around a small area was also seen as very helpful, compared with the previous Parishscapes project.

*'Having such a local focus has helped it be more manageable - just in and around Sidmouth.'* **(Steering Group Member)**

<sup>1</sup> Peter Orlando Hutchinson is referred to as POH throughout this document.

## **Volunteers Experience of the Project**

People described the range of opportunities they were involved with, the friendliness of the project Team and good communications. Volunteers seem to have been the life blood of the project.

*'It's all gone well - obviously there are hiccups from time to time, but all minor and there was steady improvement as we got better at it'* (Volunteer)

*'Good opportunities for volunteers to get involved and email communications have been effective. I was glad to have had the opportunity to be involved, albeit in a small way.'* (Volunteer)

*'The conferences and the walk that I went on at Farway all seem to have gone very well and the excavation at Mutters Moor was friendly and enjoyable.'* (Volunteer)

Being flexible about volunteer opportunities was seen as important, so that people could come and go, not feel guilty or pressured and choose the kind of opportunities that would suit them.

*'Phil extended an invite to help on the clearances and join the walk. I hadn't done anything like this before. It was really interesting and very, very well organised. Very worthwhile.'* (Volunteer)

*'We have a good 'Team Leader' in Phil Planel. I wish to thank you and the Team, most enjoyable.'* (Volunteer)

*'Different people can get involved in different things - I'm better at sitting and doing typing stuff, for others it's doing clearance stuff.'* (Volunteer)

## **The work with schools**

Three of the primary schools offered feedback about what had worked for them.

Having the transport organised and paid for was a great boon, *'I was incredibly grateful to all the staff who arranged this field trip for the children... The way it was all arranged for us made it so easy as all we had to do was send a permission slip home.'*

Phil spoke to the classes beforehand, which helped the children, put the visit into context, *'The session was informative and it got the children curious about a local landmark and the Iron Age.'*

Having a hands-on experience proved very popular, *'Practical experience, a chance to participate in 'living history'. Good experiences upon which to base writing. An opportunity to imagine the fort as it might have been. Good chances to interact and learn from other adults.'* *'Having a carousel of activities worked really well, as the children were on task the whole time. They enjoyed all the practical activities and the element of danger with some of them.'*

Students benefitted from skills that Teachers didn't know about.

They were keen to be involved again, *'It was a wonderful opportunity which we all thoroughly enjoyed. Please, please let us know if there might be any other projects. We are about to study the Romans next term!'*

### **Activities that people have reported on the most**

The practical clearance sessions and excavations, making the monuments more visible and accessible, and giving people a go at field archeology. *'People love excavations; it's so hard to for people to get experience as developers use professionals. Here the volunteers could really help.'* (Steering Group Member and Volunteer)  
*'I appreciated scrub clearance of monuments the most, and children's events too. Devon Young Archaeologist link has been good too'* (Steering Group Member)  
*'I did the clearance days.. they were very good, well organised and achieved the objectives set'* (Volunteer)

The walks were seen as a great way to open eyes to the heritage around them, *'The walks in the landscape highlighted what people saw - as people would not have know what was there.'* (Volunteer and SG member). They would be a basis for further work that people would like to see continue, *'There will be a legacy from the walks, they have established trails that were not open before, so across private land.'* (Volunteer). For others they were a simple and recognisable way of being involved, *'My involvement has been minimal, just gone along to a couple of walks/talks and passed on the details to a few others'* (Walk participant)

The transcriptions of the POH diaries and making material available on the website, although not a projected output was a significant achievement. *'The diaries and paintings are on the internet for free! There was close co-operation with the Devon Records Office - and all those diaries have been transcribed.'* (Volunteer).  
*'You can do a search online via the word documents... we transcribed more than 2000 pages with 13 volunteers'*. (Steering Group Member)

The Annual Conferences were loved by many, some of whom became self-described aficionados. *'I'm a three year 'groupie'! It's been eye-opening, pity it's over.'* (Conference Participant)  
*'I bought the POH diary some years ago and found it fascinating. The conferences sounded like a good way of finding out more. The lectures have been brilliant and gave plenty of things to think about'* (Conference participant)

The work with Sidmouth Museum to create a new exhibition mean that some of POHs artefacts from the RAMM are collection are now in Sidmouth, which became quite a tricky feat to manage for Sidmouth Museum. *'We now have it and hope they will keep extending the loan.'* (Volunteer)  
*'Has raised awareness in the town of this bit of heritage. I hope that it will last.'* (Steering Group Member)

The work with schools involved children from local primaries and from Sidmouth College. The teachers who were involved in the primary work were very enthused about their participation. *'I thought it would be a wonderful experience for the children and so arranged for Year 3 and 4 to go on one of the afternoons. The activities were also very well organised and incredibly exciting for the children.'* (Teacher)

The fixed point landscape photography that was based on places POH had painted, along with the paintings carried out by local artists, was popular part of the project, 'Artists were commissioned at the same spot [as POH painted] - that could have gone on another year!' (Steering Group member)

The Sidmouth Amateur Dramatics group created a new play about the life of POH, which was very well received. 'The play was really good - they took the idea and really brought it to life!' (Steering Group Member)  
'We reached a different audience - and we performed at capacity!' (SAD<sup>2</sup>'s Member and Volunteer)

The end of project Exhibition at Kennaway House was mentioned as a good bringing together of strands, 'I enjoyed the exhibition in Sidmouth at the end of the project especially seeing the art work etc and how everything was pulled together.' (Volunteer). The opening of this exhibition was significant for the project Team, with support being voiced from the Chairman of the District Council and the key local landowners.

### **What didn't work so well - where improvements could be made**

Most people found it hard to note any negatives or areas for improvement. 'I don't think anything didn't work', is a typical comment, made by one of the very active volunteers.

One volunteer who had only been involved in a few activities expressed some confusion about the whole project. 'I wasn't aware [of the whole project] until I went to the final exhibition. It took me a while to understand what was going on, I was a bit confused as people came in at different stages and a lot of people know more than me. Perhaps some induction or a leaflet would be useful? Sometimes Phil assumed I knew more about the project than I did. I think it all came together at the end.'

Working with the RAMM, trying to tie in the exhibition of artefacts that are held there, was problematic; it was described by those closely involved as a 'challenge'. This could have been due to many factors, and blame was not laid at any door. The issues faced were to do with the tardiness of reply from the RAMM, which led to a very last minute preparation of the display and finally a difficulty over the cost of the loan being prepared by conservators. All of this laid considerable pressure on the volunteers involved. Phil and the team were able to provide support and use some funds for the unexpected costs.

The project team recognised that this project was more complex than Parishscapes, which had preceded it - and it required more internal support than the previous one. On the whole the external partners involved in the project were very supportive, 'I was very pleased with the local landowner support and the in-kind assistance we received from organisations like the Forestry Commission and Clinton Devon Estates'. (Steering Group Member). Yet it was still a tricky project to stay on top of and keep everyone happy. The team had been keen to make a connection between POH's geological work and the Jurassic Coast World Heritage Site, but this did not come to fruition which was a little frustrating.

<sup>2</sup> SAD is shorthand for Sidmouth Amateur Dramatic Society.

There were specific suggestions from volunteers, school teachers and conference participants to make a few little improvements:

- To index the pictures on the website to make searching easier
- Ways for the less mobile to access the sites
- Label vegetarian food at the conferences
- Use microphones at the conference and consider room layout so that all can see what is happening
- Have a newsletter that isn't emailed, for those who don't or can't use the web
- Encourage more involvement for children at public events, 'I would bring my grandchildren to suitable events'.
- The story-telling needed more visual aids to keep the children engaged, and 'One seemed to be linked to Ancient China which was a little confusing for the children'
- As children chose what they did, they didn't complete all the activities, 'so it may have been better to make sure they did complete things'.

## Evaluation of the project against the three themes

Interestingly, many of the project activities cross over between themes, so comments and reflections are in the heading they most closely seem to belong within. Some activities were not planned for in the original bid, for example the POH diary transcripts and putting the scanned POH pictures online.

### **Theme 1: to improve learning about our heritage.**

[This would be delivered through a suite of guided walks, illustrated talks, special events, workshops, training events and the evolution of an annual conference based around the historic environment that was instigated as part of the former Parishscapes project. There would be opportunities for artefacts held by the Royal Albert Memorial Museum to be brought into the local area to be exhibited at local museums and village halls.]

Being involved in the walks and sharing information with others not only spread the learning, it also helped some volunteers to become much more fluent in what had happened in their local area. One volunteer said, 'I have helped several times with interpretive walks - Bronze Age walk on Gittisham Common. I learnt a lot and giving the walks made me read up a lot on Prehistory to reinforce my knowledge!' Being a part of the walk has led to people developing further interest and involvement in their local landscape, in their own way, *'Really enjoyed the bronze age barrow walks and I am doing some reading up on it, and hope to go and do some more walks of Peak Hill'*. (Conference Participant)

Having the data online makes it easily available to people, including those not directly involved in the project. One volunteer told about a friend who had used the online search tool to discover what POH had said about his own house and village. Another volunteer commented about how it had led to further their own research, *'My involvement has been limited for personal reasons, but nevertheless I was able to learn something about the local area and to discover sites that I was not previously aware of. The project has heightened my awareness of the contribution made by POH and prompted me to do further reading.'*

The events, workshops and practical activities have allowed people to compare the changes in the landscape, as described by one volunteer. *'I have enjoyed being able to compare then and now, what changes have taken place. I have an increased perception of surroundings - you could write a book on this one!'*

A Conference Participant described a similar learning experience, *'I have had my eyes opened to observe the landscape more closely and to consider and think about the things one sees'.*

The SADs play about POHs life was a real triumph for those involved, and a massive effort to stage. They got to within hours of saying they could not do it as they couldn't find a lead - but their tenacity kept them going. It involved many people and brought them into contact with other aspects of the project.

The feedback from the conference participants suggested that most had come to more than one, and became followers of the POH project that way. *'I have been to the first two, and enjoyed them, so to miss this one was not an option!'*

Another spoke of the direct learning they had gained from the conference itself, *'A unique insight in to 19th Century landscape, society, mindset and values. It has heightened my awareness of changes in the last 150 years'.*

Another talked of their learning, *'I have learnt much more about the archeology of sites, of East Devon, about POH, his paintings and the crisis in the Parish Church in the 1860's. Today was a very good day.'*

The links with the RAMM were not as positive as hoped, yet the local exhibition now at the Sidmouth Museum is going well. *'We are hoping they will extend the loan - and perhaps make it semi-permanent.'* (Steering Group member and Volunteer)

The primary school teachers who visited Blackbury Camp were very enthusiastic about what they and the children had learned. *'Next year we have our local history project, where I will talk about Blackbury camp as part of the unit. Now that the children have had first hand experience of going there and taking part in Iron Age activities it will be much easier for them to relate to it. I also learnt a great deal. As I am not a local person my knowledge of local history is limited.'*

The involvement of Sidmouth School in painting the landscapes was remarked on by one volunteer who heard the 12 and 13 year olds talking in front of 40-50 adults about their watercolours which had been inspired by POH landscapes. *'They were enthused, which was really impressive'.*



For some others there were more academic rewards of being involved, *'The main benefit I got was to have a very interesting topic for my advanced project [Masters in bio-archaeology] it also gave me the opportunity to practice my skills and learn new ones. It was also of benefit to the RAMM as they had a copy of the report which contained new information and analysis for their archive. The POH project also received a copy of the report.'* (Volunteer).

*'I have been to two of the annual conferences and with my wife to two guided walks, at Sidbury Castle and on Farway Common. With Phil's agreement I will also be using some of POH's illustrations in a book I am writing about Rev WA Jones, a nineteenth century geologist and antiquary from Taunton.'* (Conference Participant)

## **Theme 2: to improve access to and interpretation of our heritage**

[Building on the AONB team's relationship with key landowners, the project will implement a programme of access and interpretation works at key sites. This work will form part of the wider programme of active conservation works the AONB team and other partners are involved in through a range of related funding programmes]

The online resources - the diaries and pictures - can also be seen as a different interpretation tool, and certainly a large number of people have commented on their usefulness in that way. *'It's more available to people - on the website. It's like a library.'* One volunteer compared the work of getting POHs diaries on the net as being like accessing an *'... old guidebook of the Cyclades I've used for holidays - you can see changes in the places'*.

Clearing the sites was seen as really significant by many of those involved. *'Opening up Peak hill, Mutters Moor, all the work at Farway and the bronze age walk and volunteers who told stories. It was something lovely. Trackways were put on the common for the walk which made it easier. In terms of accessing the heritage it's big!'* (Steering Group Member and Volunteer). Some questioned if numbers of visitors were the thing,

*'The clearance has opened things up, you wouldn't have realised there was anything there. Perhaps you don't need to count [how many people come] it's just the fact that it's visible and available. If we have 50 visitors is it worth more than one who is interested?'* (Steering Group Member and Volunteer). The excavations have awakened people to more of what is around them,

*'Stimulated my interest in archeology and parts of Sidmouth that I wasn't aware of.'* (Volunteer)

People talked about how the project had generally raised awareness of POH and his work. These three similar comments from volunteers say it all. *'Hopefully it has stimulated and interest in POH. It's amazing the number of people who don't know about him.'* *'This will put POH on the map a bit more - he's always been there but a bit taken for granted. I hope he will be taken a bit more seriously.'* *'This has put POH on the map here in Sidmouth - there has been a huge amount of talk and discussion in the area, and I think that will continue.'*

### Theme 3: helping people take an active part in their heritage

[The project will coordinate community archaeology events; trial excavations; various surveying techniques; cultural events; making connections with local arts societies to sketch and draw what Hutchinson would see today and develop the profile of the work of Hutchinson within local history societies.]

Those who helped recognised that they were involved in something bigger than themselves, part of a community, *'It's a community thing, brings people together who are not necessarily interested in POH. It's the involvement with people I enjoyed the most. Meeting people you wouldn't usually do, hearing stories and finding out things'* (Volunteer and Steering Group member).

There was also an older volunteer in his 80's who would regularly turn out for the clearance sessions, and bring along old tools, *'Like a double-handled saw, which was still fit for purpose'*. This seems to show a sharing of living heritage - of the old tools and ways - between volunteers.

When the volunteers were doing clearance work, locals and walkers would ask what they were up to, and hence a little more learning seeped out. *'Just the fact that people are doing this, being in the car-park, is advertising. People don't always know what they are walking over. And it's not just for enthusiasts, people see you doing things and they want to know! Word gets around.'* The value of having volunteers involved is not to be underestimated, *'Experts are few on the ground so if locals can do this then we can all do it together.'* (Steering Group Member)

People were very keen and committed, despite the great British weather, as described by one volunteer, *'We went up the cliffs in the wind and rain [doing clearance] and there were 12 people, all happy as anything. It had been arranged and were were committed, you feel like you're doing something useful'*.

Another remarked on the numbers involved, *'The enthusiasm of the people involved - where do they all come from?'*

Involving people in the dig at Mutters Moor brought in many volunteers and enabled a good deal of work to be done on a very low budget, as described by Cressida from the Historic Environment Service at Devon CC. *'We had 7-8 volunteers a day for a week and a half, and they all had a good go at digging. Some people only came for a day, which is good as not everyone can do lots of days'*.

Another volunteer praised both the dig and Cressida's role; *'Over the past years the opportunity for volunteers helping at digs seems to have lessened, partly with the advent of commercial organisations charging volunteers for the privilege, in direct contradiction to the increased public interest in accessible archaeology. So, it was with surprise and joy that I found myself on the Seven Stones dig. Cress was very patient, helpful, educational, engaging and amusing to be with. As an example of an archaeologist fronting the public she was great. The three days only on which I could help were thoroughly enjoyable in every respect, and I learnt much in such a short time.'*

People experienced a sense of ownership of their landscape's history through being involved in clearances and excavations, as described by one volunteer, *'I believe I am right in saying that the some of the funding for the dig was conditional upon community involvement. I absolutely applaud this, with all the advantage of 'ownership' that goes with local people being involved in their own history.'*

Another Steering Group member commented *'We've actually got local people involved in local sites, so people are more aware and want to protect it more. The practical involvement was very good'*

The range of people involved and topics covered was notable, *'All in all I would say that it was a very beneficial project. It has engaged different people at different levels, created more awareness about local scheduled monuments and hopefully therefore increased the chances of them being well cared for'*(Volunteer)

*'Obviously I have seen only a small part of the project's work but I do like the range of matters covered and the wide-ranging involvement of many organisations, both public and voluntary'* (Participant)

There was practical learning of techniques too, *'I learned how and why landscape changes and how new projects can make use of this knowledge, and the basics of archeological survey techniques. Enjoyed it all!'* (Conference Participant)

### **What people said about Peter Orlando Hutchinson**

To underline the comments about the learning that has taken place, it is interesting to note that a good handful of people talked quite passionately about the man himself and what they had learned.

*'To me, he's a hero because he has been highly underestimated. When you read the diaries you see he was a man of the period. You see what a Victorian bachelor did with his life. He fought the changes in the church and he made sure that artefacts that were found were put back or taken to the RAMM - otherwise they would have been lost.'* (Volunteer)

*'We got some nice details about what POH was like as a personality. We could see him as a man of his time, very Baring-Gould like - an 19th century Gentleman antiquarian. He had a modern appreciation of the scientific approach and was living in Victorian Sidmouth with all it's quiriness and the small town ambience.'* (Steering Group Member)

*'Others didn't record as much as POH did. He wasn't upper class a vicar or squire. He didn't have the same prestige and was maybe a little eccentric.'* (Volunteer)

*'POH is so real for me, and we've made other people realise who and where he was. We've seen through his eyes.'* (Volunteer and Steering Group Member)

## Project Legacy, Ideas for the future and Evaluators Observations

### The Project Legacy

This project has shown again that the AONB Team is very capable of creating, leading and managing an innovative project with many partners. The comments from Steering Group members and Volunteers show that people like this type of project, this way of working, and that there is continued appetite for similar kinds of work.

*'I hope they can carry on in some form... this project has been very different to the last, more practical work. It would be good to pass it on in some form.'*

(Steering Group Member)

*'POH is a specific personage - there is potential for something like this to roll-out. Small scale pilots get good value for money and sets the ground for others. Knowing Chris and the AONB Team something else will happen - they have a very innovative streak.'*

(Steering Group Member)

The digitised POH resources which are available freely have created a good legacy for those who are interested, and will need to be kept up to date, as e-formats and technology change. It would be good to find a way of tracking how much these resources are being used and getting some kind of feedback from users - to see if the format is still working or if more work is needed. *'Will this e-format still be accessible in 150 years, like the diaries have been for us?'* (Volunteer).

The walks have mentioned by many, as there is a eagerness to continue with those that have been created as a way for people to learn and be involved in their local area. *'I hope that the Bronze Age trails continue; that the AONB will be able to continue these'*. (Volunteer)

*'I will try to persuade our Seaton U3A Archaeology group to book a Farway Walk.'*

(Conference participant).

Volunteers may be happy to help with keeping these walks open. *'It would be good if part of the legacy could include occasional guided walks to sites explored by POH and perhaps periodic maintenance of sites cleared/tidied up as part of the project.'*

(Volunteer)

Linked to this is the goodwill, energy and enthusiasm of the volunteers who have carried out both physical and desk-work. There are very good relationships with individuals which have been nurtured during this project, which will need some kind of tending if they are to be involved in future projects or activities.

The work with schools were really appreciated and enjoyed by both teachers and children. This has created a sense of what can work well for the AONB team and productive links with local schools. To maintain this, the links will have to be kept alive and reinforced.

The Annual Conference has become something of a fixture from the Parishscapes project into the POH project. It is popular and books up well. As a legacy, there is now a long-list of those who have been before and would like to come again, so the challenge will be to maintain enthusiasm and to pull in different audiences, so that a wider group can benefit from the information and knowledge exchange.

### **Ideas and Observations**

Building on the existing pool of volunteers from the Parishscapes project has been very successful, and creating a variety of opportunities has been a key way to get and keep a range of people involved. Keeping these two elements alive in new work will take some energy and the dedication of one person to stay in touch with people - people make relationships with other people, not projects. It would be possible to widen the pool of volunteers, to include a more diverse range of people - there are organisations like MIND who may be looking for volunteer opportunities to help improve health and wellbeing for those who access their services. This would take a different kind of leadership. It may be possible to link into schools or youth groups volunteering activities, if the timing was suitable - again this would take considerable work and links with new partner organisations.

Finding ways to make information, access and learning available to more people who are or will be able to use it is a challenge for small teams such as the AONB team. Already suggested by one participant was a non-electronic newsletter for those who do not have access to the web - which could be a good proportion of the older residents of the area. It would also be worth using social media and the web more to bring non-locals and younger people into the project. For example updating other links on the web, which will increase traffic to the resources e.g. the wikipedia link [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Peter\\_Orlando\\_Hutchinson](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Peter_Orlando_Hutchinson)

Monitoring the success of events and activities during the project has helped identify areas for improvement as the project progresses, in addition to this end of project evaluation. Informal feedback from people who attended walks, conferences and volunteer activities makes the difference to someone who has had a less than positive experience. Phone calls and emails from project staff would be one way, along with feedback sheets at events.

The range of practical activities and Blackbury Camp school sessions were a real winner, so building on those links and activities would make sense in a new project. Although some of the children were confused about Saxon and Iron-age, overall they had a very engaging experience about their heritage. Children like to do practical, creative things that they do not get the opportunity to do in school (or at home), and when those activities link with the curriculum and the right point in the year, a school is more likely to get involved.

The work of making and keeping relationships, between people and with the landscape and the heritage, is at the heart of this work. People have liked having a sense of hands-on, of knowing and of being in their landscape, sometimes whatever the weather!

## **Appendix 1: People consulted for this evaluation**

### **Interviewed (*face to face or by phone*):**

Chris Woodruff, *AONB Manager*  
Phil Planel, *AONB Parishscapes Officer, Steering Group Member*  
Pete Youngman, *AONB Project Officer, Steering Group Chairman*  
Nigel Hyman, *Sid Vale Association(Museum) Steering Group Member, Volunteer*  
Cressida Whitton, *DCC Historic Environment Service, Steering Group Member*  
Martin Smith, *Volunteer, Steering Group Member*  
John Draisey, *Steering Group Member (and formerly of Devon Records Office)*  
Jill Cobley, *Volunteer and Steering Group Member*  
Barbara Farquharson, *Branscombe Project, Steering Group Member and Volunteer*  
Angela Swan, *Heritage Lottery Fund*  
John Rees, *Sidmouth Amateur Dramatics (SADs), Volunteer*  
Jenny Moon, *Story teller and Volunteer*

### **Email contributions from:**

Mike Green, *Volunteer*  
Nick Knapmann, *Volunteer*  
Mandy Kingdom, *Volunteer*  
Nigel Cole, *Volunteer*  
Alison Latham, *Farway School*  
Sam Sanders, *Beer School*  
Caroline Dare, *Musbury School*

### **Conference feedback**

Brian Turnbull, *Volunteer*  
Mrs Elizabeth Prior  
Sheila Garnett  
Alan Garnett  
Mary Rogers  
John Rees  
Jan Uden  
Mike Green  
Jennifer Harper  
Dave Seward  
Everest, Roger and Anne Phillips  
Anonymous

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