

Two Pendleside detectives are gathering evidence for a ‘case’ that will make its mark for generations.

Rigby Jerram and **Mike Woods** are looking at clues and details that lots of us ignore as we travel round the area.

They are investigating and studying 120 square kilometres that circles the iconic Pendle Hill - from the western A59 to Pendle Water in the east, to Gisburn in the north and south to Padiham.

But they aren’t scouring for evidence to convict criminals.

Instead they are collecting details for the ‘case’ of the Pendle Hill Landscape Partnership scheme, backed by the Heritage Lottery Fund, to reconnect people with their landscape and their past.

Its plans include safeguarding the area’s wildlife and heritage, improving people’s access to this popular countryside area, and providing five full time jobs and 20 apprenticeships.

The scheme has been driven forward by the Forest of Bowland Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty team.

Rigby, who has run his own ecology consultancy business for 26 years, has been commissioned to complete ecology and field boundary surveys.

He can be often spotted on high ground studying the surrounding landscape with an iPad in his hands - using modern technology to record and update centuries-old and more modern features.

He will produce a map of traditional hedges, stone walls, fences, field boundaries and features that make up the pattern of Pendleside countryside.

He is also mapping the ‘green’ of the whole area – the habitats such as the moorland, agricultural land, woodland and meadows.

“On average, I aim to survey about 3 square kilometres a day,” said Rigby who is Kendal-based.

“The information will help the Pendle Hill Landscape Partnership decide what to target in their projects and where the work is needed.”

So far, just over halfway through his task, Rigby has logged more than 1,200 hedgerows and 600 walls – noting the layout, the gaps, the trimmed hedgerows, the combinations of field boundaries.

“There are some really nice woodlands in the area – especially along the Calder and Sabden valleys.”

He's saving his survey of the actual Hill itself until later this summer when the little plants appear.

And is looking forward to the task: "I'm a fell runner but have never done any of the Pendle Hill races!"

Mike Wood's enthusiasm for digging into the past is infectious – which is sure to encourage local people to join projects investigating Pendle's past from prehistoric to medieval.

First, Mike has to gather clues and choose the best sites – at least six to eight – that will interest and involve community groups.

He's an archaeology graduate from the University of Central Lancashire which has awarded him an internship to work with the Pendle Hill Landscape Partnership in its development phase – creating imaginative projects to bring together people and Pendle Hill.

Mike says there are more than 1,600 known ancient sites around the area.

"The land around is so beautiful and so untouched, some parts are quite difficult to get to which is good from an archaeologist's perspective!"

He is contacting landowners for permission to investigate ancient mounds, field features, and puzzling land shapes he has identified on their land.

For example, he has already been to the well-researched Portfield prehistoric hill fort, on privately-owned land near Whalley.

He's investigating lost sections of Roman roads that pepper the Pendle Hill area; and the coffin roads and coffin stones often mistaken for standing stones; and a number of Bronze Age and Iron Age sites.

"I'm itching to find out about all the sites. It's so exciting. You have to cast your mind back to medieval times and beyond," he said.

"You look at the world in a different way. When you dig up some pottery or iron, for example, you wonder what it is, what it was used for. It's a little window into the past."

Mike is working with Cathy Hopley, the Partnership's development officer, and Dr Rick Peterson, head of UCLAN archaeology.

For more details about what the project is up to look at their Facebook page, Pendle Hill Project or contact cathy.hopley@lancashire.gov.uk or 07891 537835.

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