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Strasbourg, 15 March 1991  
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**Addendum to**  
PE-ZP (89) 36 rev.

STEERING COMMITTEE FOR THE CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT  
OF THE ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL HABITATS  
(CDPE)

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Group of specialists "Protected areas"

**DRAFT RESOLUTION**

**ON THE RENEWAL OF THE EUROPEAN DIPLOMA AWARDED  
TO THE PEAK DISTRICT NATIONAL PARK (UNITED KINGDOM)**

The Committee of Ministers, under the terms of Article 15.a of the Statute of the Council of Europe,

Having regard to Resolution (65) 6 instituting the European Diploma;

Having regard to Resolution (66) 22 awarding the European Diploma to the Peak District National Park;

Having regard to the proposals of the Steering Committee for the Conservation and Management of the Environment and Natural Habitats (CDPE),

Renews the European Diploma awarded to the Peak District National Park in Category C until 28 March 1996;

Attaches to the renewal the following conditions :

1. The water recreation project for Bottoms Reservoir should be abandoned as it is not consistent with the characteristics of a European Diploma holding site;
2. Provision should be made in future legislation to ensure the long-term conservation of the ecological and landscape values of all lands included in the Park which are at present in the ownership of Water Authorities;
3. i. Section 10 of the Town and Country Planning (Minerals) Act, which enables local planning authorities to serve orders prohibiting the resumption of mineral work where it appears permanently to have ceased, should be implemented as soon as practicable;
- ii. Applications for extensions of existing works should be subject to the most rigorous examination and assessed against the need for the mineral in the national interest, the lack of alternative sources of supply and the environment impact.

Addresses the following recommendation to the authorities responsible for management of the site :

1. Sufficient financial means should be made available to carry out :
  - a. detailed ecological surveys of all important wildlife habitats;
  - b. the review of mineral sites required under the Town and Country (Minerals) Act.
2. Serious consideration should be given to further increases in the funds available for improvement of management schemes and, where appropriate, land acquisition.

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Strasbourg, 14 November 1989  
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Or. Eng.

STEERING COMMITTEE FOR THE CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT  
OF THE ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL HABITATS  
(CDPE)

Committee of Experts - Protected Areas

**Peak District National Park  
(United Kingdom)**

On-the-spot appraisal for  
renewal of the European Diploma  
(Category C)

by M. Cyrille de KLEMM

with the comments of the Secretariat

Secretariat Memorandum  
prepared by the  
Directorate of Environment  
and Local Authorities



Forty years  
Council of Europe  
Quarante ans  
Conseil de l'Europe

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## PART I - REPORT BY THE EXPERT

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The Secretariat of the Council of Europe, in a letter of 15 March 1989, asked me to carry out the on-the-spot appraisal for the renewal of the European Diploma to the Peak District National Park. The appraisal was carried out on 5 and 6 April 1989.

Mr. E. Fernández Galiano, of the Council of Europe Environment, Conservation and Management Division, representing the Secretariat, accompanied me during my visit.

2. We were accompanied during the visit by Mr Michael Dower, National Park Officer, Mr Ken Parker, Assistant National Park Officer and Mr George Challenger, Heritage Adviser. We were also given the opportunity to meet Mr J. Beadle, Chairman of Cavendish, Vice-chairman of the Board, and many members of the Park staff. I wish to thank all these persons for their assistance and co-operation during the appraisal.

3. The appraisal involved several visits to places of particular interest in the Park, including the Derbyshire Dales National Nature Reserve, certain farms and estates, the National Park Study Centre at Losehill Hall and the Derwent Valley. On April 5, we attended for a short time a meeting of regional representatives of agencies concerned with agriculture, forestry and conservation. On April 6 we had the opportunity to meet Mr David Clark (Labour Party Spokesman on Agriculture) who accompanied us during the afternoon visit. We also met the local press.

II. GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF THE AREA

1. The Peak District National Park covers an area of 1404 km with a resident population of 38 000 inhabitants living in isolated farms, villages and small towns. A full description of the area appears in earlier documents submitted to the Committee. It is, therefore, sufficient to recall that the northern part of the Park is a gritstone area covered with moors, whereas the southern part consists mainly of limestone formations.

2. The northern moors constitute a water catchment area of enormous importance for the water supply of neighbouring cities. There are 52 water reservoirs in the Park. The main form of land-use in that area is hill sheep farming. The presence of red grouse, Lagopus lagopus scoticus, on the high moors provides for good shooting opportunities in the autumn. Many other ground-nesting birds also breed in that area. Conifer plantations have attracted certain species that have become rare elsewhere in England, such as the red squirrel, Sciurus vulgaris, and the pine marten, Martes martes.

3. The central and southern parts of the Park are characterised mainly by sheep, beef and dairy farming. By and large, it can be said that there are 50 000 ha of moorland, 90 000 ha of grassland and 10 000 ha of woodland in the Park. There are very few cultivated fields. Ancient woodlands have almost completely disappeared. A few remain in some dales. There are some beech and sycamore plantations.

An extremely important character of the area from the scenic point of view and also because of the micro-habitats they provide, is the existence of innumerable dry-stone walls. The particular architecture of individual farm buildings and barns as well as of village houses made of local materials is also very characteristic of the Peak District landscape.

The Park is of immense recreational value for the population of the neighbouring urban areas. An estimated population of 20 million people live within an hour's drive of the Park. There are about 18.5 million visits to the Park each year!

### III. LEGAL STATUS

1. The Peak District National Park was established in 1951 under the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act of 1949. National Parks in Britain being in fact, in spite of their name, protected landscapes, there are few, if any, statutory prohibitions or restrictions to human activities within the areas so designated. National Parks are, however, administered by National Park Authorities, which have the powers to control development. But whereas in the majority of cases these authorities are constituted by National Parks Committees, under the political and financial control of the local county councils, the Peak District and Lake District National Parks are administered by joint planning boards which enjoy a considerable degree of autonomy.

2. The Joint Planning Board of the Peak District Park is composed of 33 members, one third of whom are appointed by the Secretary of State for the Environment and the other two thirds by the county councils concerned. It constitutes an autonomous planning authority with the power to grant or deny consent for development activities (agricultural and forestry developments do not require planning permission). The powers of the board are discretionary. Appeals may, however, be lodged against its decisions, in which case, after the holding of a public inquiry, the final decision is made by the Secretary of State for the Environment. Other powers of the Board include the preparation and adoption of a structure plan for the whole area of the Park and of local plans within that area, the right to buy land, and to conclude management agreements. By and large, however, the Board has hardly any coercitive powers. It has no right of first refusal for land which is coming on the market, no power to expropriate land for the purpose of preserving natural values (it may however expropriate land to allow public access), no powers to make conservation orders.

### IV. LAND TENURE

1. The Peak District Park Board owns 4% of the land in the Park and the Nature Conservancy Council 1% (the Derbyshire Dales National Nature Reserve). Small areas are owned by the Forestry Commission and other public bodies. By far the largest public owners of land in the National Park are the Water Authorities, with 15% of the Park area,

mostly in the North. In addition, 10% of the land, particularly on the high moors, belongs to the National Trust. All the rest of the land, that is to say 70% of the total area, is in private hands. There are about 2000 individual farms. Their average size is approximately 40 ha. There are also a few very large estates such as Chatsworth, which has 7 500 ha.

#### V. PROTECTED AREAS

1. The only statutory Nature Reserve within the Park is the Derbyshire Dales National Nature Reserve which covers an area of 320 ha. Ten per cent of the total area of the Park has however been designated as Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) by the Nature Conservancy Council (NCC). Landowners must, as a consequence, notify the NCC of certain proposed developments. The NCC is empowered to negotiate management agreements with owners of SSSIs to protect these areas from damage and to encourage appropriate management.

#### VI ADMINISTRATION AND BUDGET

1. At 31 March 1988, there were 210 persons permanently employed by the Board to whom should be added a number of seasonal information centre assistants and cycle hire wardens. Total expenditures in 1987-88 amounted to over 4 million pounds. Income includes contributions from the national Government, the Countryside Commission and local authorities as well as revenue from various services provided to the public. It is particularly gratifying to note that for the fourth consecutive year, the increase in the Government's grant to National Parks has been relatively substantial (10,3% for 1989-90 for the Peak District) and well ahead of inflation.

#### VII. ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION, TRAINING AND INFORMATION

1. A unique feature of the Peak District National Park is the Losehill Hall Study Centre which was opened in 1972. The Centre runs specialist training courses and seminars. It also provides courses and day visit services for school children. There are, in addition, seven Information Centres in the Park, to which more than 360 000 people made personal visits during the past year.

#### VIII. CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT IN THE PARK

1. The main purposes of national parks in the United Kingdom are the preservation of certain landscapes for their natural beauty and the opportunities they afford for open air recreation. In addition, parks must be considered as valuable regional planning instruments for the economic and social development of certain less-favoured areas, inasmuch as they can contribute substantially to the maintenance and improvement of rural employment and welfare. In such a context, the conservation of the natural environment as such was considered by National Park Authorities as a matter of secondary importance which could be best handled by the Nature Conservancy Council, the statutory body with special competences in that field.

2. The main tasks of the Peak Park Board, therefore, have remained for a long time the processing of planning permission applications, the restoration of certain landscape features such as rural buildings and stone walls, the negotiation of access agreements on private property and the management of an ever increasing number of visitors. The situation has now changed with the growing recognition of the need to preserve and, where required, restore the natural features that form an integral part of any protected landscape.

3. The first National Park Plan which was published in 1978 has now been thoroughly revised to take into consideration this change of emphasis. Key aspects of the new Plan now include Park-wide nature conservation, archeology and the historic landscape, and agriculture and conservation, including relations with the farming community. To reflect this shift of emphasis the park staff has been strengthened with the appointment, in particular, of two ecologists and two archeologists. Last but not least, a Park-wide survey of ecological values has also been undertaken, and is almost completed. For a very large part, however, the surveys which have been carried out so far are only to the basic level and much remains to be done to cover in greater detail the sites that have been identified as being of considerable ecological importance.

4. The result of this reorganisation of the Park's aims has been the gradual development of an integrated management approach combining the conservation or restoration of natural habitats and the preservation of the landscape with the needs to improve the welfare of the resident population and to provide access and facilities for a very large number of visitors.

5. The Park, and the other agencies concerned, such as the Ministry of Agriculture, use for that purpose a wide variety of legal instruments and techniques, which are mostly based on voluntary commitments and incentives rather than on coercion. The use of certain of these techniques is limited by law to National Parks. Others may also be used elsewhere but their use in the Park is greatly facilitated by the existence of the Park's structures and staff and by the availability of funds. Thus, the Peak District National Park may be considered as a laboratory where integration techniques are developed and tested. The experience so acquired in the Park may subsequently be of major importance for the future of the European countryside.

6. The different types of instruments and techniques used in the Park will now be shortly described.

#### 6.1 Planning controls

As mentioned earlier, the Park has exclusive powers to grant planning consent for constructions or other works undertaken within its boundaries. There are about 1000 planning applications per year and their number is increasing. Out of that number, 82% are allowed, with or without particular conditions, and 18% refused. Each year there are 40 to 50 appeals made against the Board's decisions, 70% of which are won by the Park.

One of the most controversial types of activities for which planning consent is required is the extraction of minerals. The policy of the Board is to refuse planning consent when the opening of a new quarry or the extension of an existing one will result in unacceptable damage to the landscape. As such refusals are generally appealed, there was a need for a clear government policy regarding quarrying in National Parks. This was the subject of a ministerial statement in 1987 which was largely based on Recommendation 1.(ii) of Resolution (86) 17 of the Committee of Ministers relating to the renewal of the European Diploma to the Park. The extension of two existing limestone quarries at Topley Pike and Eldon Hill was thus refused, after the holding of public inquiries, by the Secretary of State for the Environment in 1986 and 1987 respectively.

## 6.2 Management of land owned by the Board

As stated previously, the Board now owns 4% of the total area of the Park. The management of the Board's property is largely carried out according to management plans prepared on the basis of detailed ecological and archeological surveys.

An example is that of Warslow Moors Estate, which was acquired in 1986 as a capital transfer in lieu of inheritance tax. Much of the land is of high wildlife interest and will be included in a proposed SSSI. There are, in particular, wet pastures which provide important habitat for breeding snipe, Gallinago gallinago, curlew, Numenius arquata, and lapwing, Vanellus vanellus. The estate is let to tenants who have to comply with strict restrictions with regard, in particular, to stocking levels and agricultural practices. Ploughing, reseeding, drainage and the application of artificial fertilisers, slurry, herbicides and pesticides are, inter alia, prohibited. Traditional hay meadows must continue to be managed for hay to prevent loss of their characteristic flora. They must be cut only after 15 July.

Another example is Big Fernyford Farm, which was purchased jointly with the NCC to protect and enhance the habitat used by a population of black grouse, Tetrao tetrix. The land is let to a tenant, who is required to enter into a management agreement with the NCC and the Board. The agreement imposes restrictions to the farmer's mowing and grazing activities and provides for habitat improvement measures.

## 6.3 Farm grant notifications

The Wildlife and Countryside Act of 1981 provides that farmers who intend to seek Ministry of Agriculture grants for farm investments in a National Park have to notify the County Planning Authority first. In the Peak District National Park this means the Park Board. The Board may object of the making of the grant on the grounds that the proposed activities will have adverse effects on the natural beauty, including the fauna and flora of the countryside. If the grant is refused as a result of such an objection, the Board must offer to the landowner to enter into a management agreement imposing restrictions on the farmer's activities and providing for compensation. During the past year nearly 900 proposed operations were thus notified to the Board. Nearly 40% were modified by agreement with the farmer to take account of National Park interests.



There was no need to raise formal objections to any work and only a few of the modified schemes required the negotiation of formal Management Agreements with compensation payments. The value of this system is that not only does it make possible to avoid irreparable damage to important natural features resulting from the grant of Government subsidies, but also that it gives to the Board the opportunity to acquire a detailed knowledge of the needs and operations of most individual farmers within the Park and of the conservation requirements of their land.

#### 6.4 Management agreements

The conclusion of management agreements must be considered as a last resort possibility when negotiations have failed, as they constitute an expensive method of securing conservation. By late 1988 a total of 25 management agreements had been concluded and 17 others were actively negotiated.

#### 6.5 The farm conservation scheme

Pursuant to the Wildlife and Countryside Act of 1981, the Peak District Park Board has the power to give financial assistance to landowners, by way of grants or loans, for the purpose of conserving the natural beauty of the Park and of promoting its enjoyment by the public, subject to any condition that it may think fit.

Thus, certain farmers agreed to forfeit the right to certain grants and allowances from the Ministry of Agriculture and in return to receive a grant from the Board for the maintenance of flower-rich fields. This scheme, which constituted a part of an Integrated Development Project designed to stop rural decline in three particular areas within the Park, has been very successful. Approximately 90 ha of flower-rich grassland have been so preserved.

The Board's Farm Conservation Scheme was launched in the autumn of 1987. Its purpose is to offer a full range of incentives for conservation achievements throughout the Park by using not only the Board's own resources but also by facilitating access to grants made by other bodies such as the Ministry of Agriculture, the Forestry Commission, the NCC, and English Heritage, the agency which deals with historic buildings. Grants made by the Board are thus used to finance conservation actions which cannot be assisted by other means or as a complement to other schemes.

Agreements already made today under the scheme provide for the repair of dry stone walling, the planting of trees and shrubs, the management of woodlands, grasslands and hay meadows, the planting and management of hedgerows and the construction of ponds.

#### 6.6 Exemption from inheritance tax for land of outstanding scenic quality

Under the Capital Transfer Tax Act of 1984, an exemption from the inheritance tax may be granted for land of outstanding scenic quality subject to the agreement of a Management Plan with the Countryside Commission. Continued exemption from taxation is conditional upon continuing compliance with the terms of the Management Plan.

The largest private estate within the Park, the Chatsworth Estate, is now subject to such a Management Plan and the Park Board supervises its implementation as agent for the Countryside Commission. The Plan requires compliance with certain management practices such as the maintenance of walls and hedges, the maintenance of existing buildings in traditional materials, the maintenance of moorland as dwarf shrub and rough grass; subject to appropriate grazing, and the protection of archeological and historic features. Appropriate restrictions will be incorporated into any new tenancies or licences. The Estate will seek the Board's agreement before carrying out any change of land use, agricultural improvement, or forestry operation which would affect to scenic quality of the land.

#### 6.7 Environmentally Sensitive Areas

This is a scheme which was launched by the Ministry of Agriculture in 1984 under Article 19 of EEC Regulation 797/85 on Agricultural Structures. In Environmentally Sensitive Areas (ESA) farmers if they so wish receive an annual payment per hectare of land in return for the use of traditional management methods. The Northern part of the Peak District National Park was officially designated as an ESA in January 1988. It covers about 37 000 ha of moors and associated farms. From the very beginning of the scheme, 71 landowners, owning more than 90% of the land in the ESA, have entered into voluntary agreements for the management of their land and a few more are expected to join soon. Landowners farmers and shooting tenants are all involved in the conclusion of agreements under the scheme.

There are two forms of agreements. Tier One agreements prohibit cultivation, fertilisers, lime and pesticides on moorlands. A programme of regular heather and grass burning must be established. 25% of the ewes must be brought off the moors in winter. Tier Two agreements provide for additional requirements for stock management and heather regeneration. Payments are £10 per hectre and per year for Tier One agreements and £20 for Tier Two. Agreements must be concluded for a period of five years.

#### 6.8 The Moorland Management Project

Moorlands cover approximately 37% of the National Park. They are of great ecological, archeological and landscape value and are also crucial for the maintenance of sheep farming, water supply and recreation. They have been proposed as a Special Protection Area under the EEC Birds Directive of 1979. Large areas of this unique habitat have, however, become degraded. A project was, therefore, launched in 1987 to encourage the development of good management practices. It is overseen by a steering group consisting of representatives of all the organisations concerned, including farmers organisations, and is jointly funded by the Board, the Water Authorities, the NCC and the National Trust.

Studies have been made on erosion, fires, revegetation trials and the effects of reducing grazing levels. Restoration trials on severely eroded ground have also been carried out.

A major scheme was launched in 1987 to assess the severe erosion problems caused by tramping along the Pennine Way, a long-distance National Trail, which is partly included in the Park. The aim of the project is to identify and test repair and preventive techniques. It is financed by the Countryside Commission and is operated jointly with the Park.

## 6.9 Cooperation with Water Authorities

Water Authorities are public bodies in charge of providing water supply. Under the Wildlife and Countryside Act of 1981, these bodies have a statutory duty to exercise their functions as to further the conservation and enhancement of natural beauty and the conservation of flora, fauna and geological or physiographical features of special interest.

Some 15% of the area of the Park is in the ownership of three Water Authorities. Much of this land has specific archeological or wildlife values in addition to its nationally important scenic interest.

Joint working arrangements have been concluded between the Board and the Water Authorities covering virtually all the land they own in the Park. These arrangements have led to the development of Area Management Plans, providing, inter alia, for free public access to large areas of moorland, the establishment of footpaths and bridleways and the conclusion of many land management agreements relating to woodland conservation, field wall restoration and heather regeneration.

## 6.10 Integration

The success of the numerous conservation instruments used in the Park is to a great extent due to the fact they are applied within a limited geographic area and that this area is a national park, where certain rules, procedures and financing opportunities exist which are not normally available elsewhere. Last but not least, the Park Board has the political will to carry out an integrated conservation policy, as well as the staff and the financial means, albeit perhaps still insufficient, to implement that policy.

An interesting manifestation of the integrative trend which is developing in the Park has been the establishment of an informal committee, the Rural Land Management Executive Group, composed of representatives of the various bodies owning land within the Park, including private landowners.

The group provides a forum for mutual information and the discussion of problems of common interest. Thus, at the meeting we attended during the appraisal, the subject of scrub encroachment in the limestone dales was on the agenda. The purpose of the discussion was to seek help for a programme of action for scrub control and grazing intensification.

## IX. CURRENT PROBLEMS

### 1. Ecological surveys

To be fully successful, an integrated programme must necessarily be based on detailed ecological information. Indeed, if existing conservation instruments are to be used to the maximum of their potential effectiveness, it is essential, it would seem, that the various incentives available be fine-tuned to the particular ecological and conservation requirements of the lands to which they are to be applied. This would clearly be the case for any assistance

given to farmers under the Farm Conservation Scheme or for the examination of application for agricultural grants. But even where the conservation instrument used is by its very nature relatively crude, as in the case of the ESA scheme, there would seem to be no reason why, in the future, each individual agreement concluded with a farmer could not be tailored to the specific requirements of the particular piece of land to which it applies.

This ecological fine-tuning, however, will not be possible without a very thorough ecological survey and continuous monitoring of the Park area. In spite of the recruitment of a second ecologist, the Park staff is clearly not in the position to carry out itself all the work required.

The Park has, however, been able to benefit, for some time, from the Government Community Programme funded by the Manpower Services Commission. Under this programme people were made available to the Park for a variety of work, including archeological and ecological surveys and the management and improvement of sites. This programme has now been discontinued. The Board is considering how to replace this manpower, but even partial replacement will probably be very costly.

## 2. Proposal to develop a water sports centre

A planning application for the development of a water sports centre at Bottom Reservoir, an artificial lake located in the Park, has been refused by the Board. The proposal involved the construction of a cable ski-tow, a dry ski slope, facilities for canoeing and windsurfing, and of a 56 x 37 x 11.8 metres building (808 square metres of floor space) containing a gymnasium, a sauna, changing rooms, a restaurant, a bar, shops and a boat store. The Board felt that the project would result in an over intensive use, or uses incompatible with National Park policies and would, in addition, constitute a severe intrusion upon the landscape of the Park.

The Board's decision has been appealed by the developer and a public inquiry on the matter is expected to be initiated shortly. The Board intends to maintain its position at the inquiry.

As the proposals concerned are clearly incompatible with the aims of National Parks, consideration should be given to the possibility of withdrawing the Diploma should the project be allowed to proceed.

## 3. Water authority privatisation

New legislation is currently under consideration to privatise Water Authorities. As the new Water Bill now stands, there would seem to be a serious risk that land which is at present owned by these authorities and is not essential to provide water supply could be sold or put to other uses by the new owners. Admittedly, the Board in the exercise of its planning powers would continue to be able to refuse planning permission when new proposed uses of the land are incompatible with the aims of the Park. On the other hand, it is clear that virtually none of the present arrangements between the Board and the Water Authorities could have been achieved by planning regulations, as they mostly depend on the voluntary cooperation of these bodies.

It would seem therefore essential that some guarantees relating to the future use of Water Authority land be incorporated into the new bill. This could be achieved by any or all of the following means: powers given to the Board to make conservation orders; powers of compulsory purchase; right of first refusal should any of the land be offered for sale; covenants running with the land providing for negative and where required positive obligations.

#### 9.4 Quarrying

Resolution (86) 17 of the Council of Europe Committee of Ministers on the renewal of the European Diploma to the Peak District National Park recommended (paragraph 1.i) that "section 10" of Town and Country Planning (Minerals) Act 1981, which enables local planning authorities to serve orders prohibiting the resumption of mineral working where it appears permanently to have ceased, should be implemented as soon as possible." Section 10 entered into force in 1985. Its implementation, however, requires that a review be undertaken by the Board of all mineral working permissions in the park that have been previously granted. For lack of funds, it has not yet been possible to initiate this review.

Although planning permission has been refused for major extensions of several quarries in the Park; there is now a risk that further limestone demand for flue gas desulphurisation, as a result of measures taken to reduce SO<sup>2</sup> emissions, will give rise to increased pressure to open new quarries in the Park. This would be a typical case of an indirect transfer of an environmental damage from one area to another. It is, therefore, essential that paragraph 1.i of Resolution (86) 17 of the Committee of Ministers continue to be complied with.

## PART II - COMMENTS BY THE SECRETARIAT

1. Introduction

The physical features and landscape of the area being well described in previous documents, this report will mainly deal with the progress of the park's management in the last five years and the specific problems that the area will have to face in the near future.

2. Management

The Peak Park Joint Planning Board is the body for the management of the park. It acts for the conservation of the area through a variety of channels, some of them rather original and most of them very effective. In the first instance, the Board is the planning authority. Its decisions may be revoked on appeal by the Secretary of State for the Environment, usually following a public inquiry. The Board coordinates, in an unofficial but effective and pragmatic way, all other public and private bodies with specific interests and/or programmes in the area. It also animates a wide variety of initiatives of all kinds (economic, archaeological, educational, ecological, etc). Finally it owns 4% of the land.

We shall try to describe some of the issues that were dealt with during the visit of the experts and which are of relevance to the renewal of the European Diploma.

2.1 Planning

The Board being the planning authority, it is well placed to have direct contacts with most of the owners or tenants in the area, who seek consultation on very different issues. This permits the Board to be very present in the area and it tries to pass on its ideas on conservation.

We could appreciate that decisions of the Board were very much guided to avoid risk to the natural and aesthetic values as a result of new developments. Even in cases where jobs were at stake (as the refusal for enlargement of a factory that had finally to move out of the park), the Board has been firm to defend such values, establishing a conservation-minded policy.

Out of approximately one thousand demands annually for planning permission, roughly 82% are agreed with some modifications and 18% refused. From 40 to 50 decisions go to appeal out of which 12 to 15 are finally agreed upon.

### 2.1.1 Bottoms Reservoir

One of the above-mentioned appeals strongly attracted our attention. It concerns a recreation development to be set on the shores of Bottoms Reservoir. This is a 19th century reservoir of approximately 1 kilometre long and up to 250 metres wide which is surrounded by grassland and woodland. The project is to create a waterskiing facility. It involves the construction of two buildings, amounting roughly to 956 m<sup>2</sup>, which are to include two shops, a bar, a sauna and a club house. There will also be a restaurant with seating capacity for 70-80 people. A teleski, with 11 metre high steel gantries is also envisaged. On a prominent hillside a 110 metre long plastic dry ski slope would be set up for winter use, together with an electric ski tow.

Apart from the activities that would have to be permitted if the project is approved (water skiing, fishing, canoeing, model boats and sub aqua), it is likely that this development would attract a high number of spectators and that frequentation of the area would be considerably increased. The Peak District National Park Structure Plan states that "The Board will not, in any case, normally grant permission for the development of recreational facilities which would be seriously intrusive in the park, by virtue of their scale, form and other features". The proposed development is, in our opinion, incompatible with the characteristics of a national park and much in contradiction with the natural and aesthetic values for which the park was awarded the European Diploma.

### 2.2 Management of areas of wildlife interest

About 10% of the park's surface is notified as SSSI's (Sites of Special Scientific Interest) or declared NNR's (National Nature Reserves).

NNR's are owned and managed directly by the NCC (Nature Conservancy Council). We visited one, a splendid limestone dale called Lath Kill Dale, which is partly covered by a reasonably semi-natural ancient ash woodland and partly (on the southern aspect) by species-rich grazed grasslands. Patch coppicing of the forest is a current practice to increase the diversity of the ground flora and its associated invertebrate fauna, specially butterflies. The management seemed to be very efficiently and professionally assured by NCC staff.

Apart from the few dales presently managed as NNR's, the main habitats of conservation interest are moorlands and some dry chalk grasslands. In the next item management of farmland will be discussed in detail. For the management of moorland there exists a specific project which was launched in 1987 to encourage good management practices leading to the survival of seminatural vegetation. The project, which includes a number of interesting research and monitoring projects, has a reasonable funding and very ambitious goals. Twelve important organisations with competency in the park are represented in its steering group, which assures the implementation of decisions. This project, which is the third on moorland management, the previous being more focused on erosion and moor restoration, was perceived by the experts as a substantial and important contribution to the conservation of nature. We felt that the research being carried out and the evaluation of the results of the financial incentives being set for moorland conservation made the Peak District an extraordinary laboratory of rural management practices for nature conservation purposes.

More traditional, but equally interesting, conservation work is being carried out on one threatened species, the black grouse Lyrurus tetrix, which has its southernmost British breeding population in the park. This species requires a rather varied landscape to be used at different times for different purposes so that management of the habitat for this species is no simple task. The NCC joined forces with the Board to acquire part of a property (Warslow moors) of special significance to the species. That area, Fernyford Farm, is subject to a management agreement to restrict some farming practices to benefit the needs of the black grouse. The population, a small one, seems to be secure for the time being.

The experts felt that the Board had, in collaboration with the NCC, made substantial improvements in dealing with nature conservation matters. The Board now counts two ecologists among its staff, a positive sign that it is more concerned with the improvement of wildlife values in the park. It must be said in this context that although the park's Board has not changed its composition to include more ecologists, it is likely that a person deeply interested in ecology will join the Board shortly. In any case, the experts felt that a change in the composition of the Board was certainly secondary if, as it seems to be the case, the Board in toto is becoming more aware of the importance of ecological issues. A Wildlife Executive Group to coordinate different administrations on conservation issues is to be created soon.

### 2.3 Management of farmland

Appropriate management of farmland to respect natural and aesthetic values is one of the priority goals of all authorities involved in the Peak District. This is not achieved by an isolated project or programme, but rather by the superposition and coordination of projects launched by different administrations or authorities. Most programmes are directed to encourage a more ecologically-minded farm management by the approximately 2,000 farmers present in the park.

The park's Board plays a very important role in coordination, by regular and informal contacts, with all the people who, as officials, have to carry out a project from their own body or administration in the park. A Rural Land Management Executive Group discusses different issues and proposes common solutions or ways to coordinate the action of the different administrations involved. Officers from the park's Board, the Ministry of Agriculture, NCC, Forestry Commission, landowners' associations and National Farmers' Union attend. Some of the mechanisms used to encourage proper management are the following (for more detailed information consult document PE-ZP (89) 3, annual report for 1988):

#### Environmentally sensitive areas

This is a Ministry of Agriculture's scheme by which £10 to £20 sterling per hectare are given annually to farmers, landowners and shooting tenants who voluntarily agree to adopt some management practices such as removing a quarter of their stock from moorland during three winter months (to permit a better regeneration of the heather), avoiding pesticides, fertilisation, fencing or ploughing of moorland and keeping



stone walls in good repair. In areas of rough grazing farming, a certain stocking level is demanded, mowing cannot be done before the herbage has flowered and set seed, fertilisers and pesticides have to be avoided and nests are to be marked and protected till breeding has taken place. Some provisions are also made in respect to controlled burning. Most of the farmland that is eligible for these grants is now subject to such agreements the results of which are controlled (by measuring species diversity) regularly. The experts found this scheme very interesting and valuable.

#### Management agreements

They apply to areas which have been notified as SSSI's, to land owned by the park and to areas within the park where proposed agricultural investment would damage the environmental quality of the site. They are rather flexible in their terms, provide for protection of the site and contain provisions to ensure management in an environmentally appropriate way. Compensation is paid based on the loss of profitability of the land as a result of the restrictions agreed on management.

The experts visited two farms with management agreements and found it a satisfactory - if costly - solution which seemed to be working properly. We felt, however, that more means would have to be dedicated to this programme if it were to be applied to a substantial part of the park's area.

#### Integrated rural development

This is a scheme set up by the park authority where a graduated payment is agreed according to the results obtained. Walls of different sizes receive different payments per mile of wall if they are properly kept, and management of species-rich fields is encouraged by paying a certain amount per hectare and per flowering plant recorded in sample quadrangles. The project has been working on a limited basis for six years and no farmer has dropped out. A new Farm Conservation Scheme was launched in 1988, which introduces some modification of the previous scheme, mainly that it facilitates the introduction of more positive action in environment and landscape conservation.

\* \* \*

An important element in the success of the previous schemes is, undoubtedly, the quality of the information that the park authority has on the land that is to be subject to an agreement. While information on SSSI's is satisfactory, much reliable ecological information is still lacking on the environmental quality of much of the park area. An ambitious project of registering and mapping the environmental features of the park, which involved a high number of unemployed biologists, had to be suspended as a result of changes in UK government legislation concerning their temporary contracts. Whatever means are used, the experts found it important that ecological mapping of the area as they felt that only a detailed knowledge of its environmental characteristics would permit the planning and carrying out of a sound management of the park's natural value.

### 3. Quarrying

There seems to have been little progress in the search for a long-term solution to the important quarrying activity within the park. This is not due to lack of resolution by the park's authorities to control mineral extractions but rather to the lack of financial means to put in hand the long-term review of mineral sites which is required under the Minerals Act 1981. This is a particularly regrettable fact due mainly to the foreseen increase in demand for limestone which will follow the government's decision to reduce acid emissions from coal-fired power plants.

The experts found there was a great risk of an undesirable expansion of active quarrying and an even more worrying resumption of mineral extraction in abandoned quarries with old but valid quarrying permits. Some applications for extensions have been refused and an interesting project on more landscape-friendly quarrying techniques is being carried out. It mainly aims at leaving, after extraction, surfaces which would be better integrated into the landscape and recolonised by natural dale vegetation.

### 4. Conservation of rural architecture and buildings of historical importance

The experts were informed of several projects that had been carried out to maintain or restore a number of buildings of historical interest in different parts of the park. As this practice has been a very well established policy in the history of the park since its beginning and much attention has been dedicated to it, we were just happy to register it by visiting some of them. It must be said that we felt that, in this field too, a remarkable and well addressed effort was being carried out. Often the restoration of buildings or farmhouses is intended to enhance the local economy and the improvement of living conditions of the park's population. As it is felt that in the long run the park will maintain its character only if its inhabitants find the means to make a living, we welcomed this understanding. The park authority encourages job creation in the park by offering appropriate settlements for small (and clean) industries and in many other ways, such as promoting rural tourism.

### 5. Information and recreation policy

The experts visited the park's Losehill Study Centre, which is a splendid study centre with accommodation for 60 visitors, laboratories, library and conference rooms. It holds more than 50 four days to one week courses every year, mostly on countryside and wildlife subjects. The National Trust also have educational facilities and an Information Centre in the south of the park. The park authorities also publish all sorts of booklets and leaflets intended for tourists.

One of the main worries of the park authorities is that the high number of tourists visiting the area may find suitable places for walking, resting or landscape contemplation. The experts could see that many efforts were being directed to that aim. The Pennine Way, which crosses the park, is being improved to avoid erosion. A disused railway has been made suitable for walking, thus avoiding unwanted walkers on moors or grazed farmland.

As an important part of the park is owned by the water authorities, a fruitful cooperation has been established to provide adequate parking and resting places in some areas, as well as education facilities. Access is now granted to an important part of the water authorities' land, especially in spots of particular landscape interest. The experts visited the facilities at Derwent Valley reservoirs and could check how the water authorities had engaged in an interesting project of land use to serve the public visiting the area while environmentally important areas were safeguarded from uncontrolled visiting.

6. Public property and land privatisation

About 30% of the park land is in public hands (including 10% owned by the National Trust, which is a private institution with public aims). The Nature Conservancy Council owns 1% of the area, the park's Board about 4% and the water authorities 15%. Since the previous visit of Council of Europe experts, the park has acquired a 2,000 ha property, the Warlow Moors Estate.

The fact that the Board works in close and friendly coordination with the institutions mentioned above has enormously facilitated in the past the success of an appropriate conservation policy. A bill presented to parliament foresees the privatisation of the land now owned by the water authorities. This will place in private hands half the public land within the park boundaries. We found considerable concern among all the officials we met and in particular the Board's Chairman, Mr John Beadle, as to the future of this land.

Although the new owners will have to comply with the general restrictions on land use set for the area, there is a certain risk that much of the conservation work achieved will have to be revised. The general public is also deeply concerned as to a possible change in access, much of the water authorities' land being now open to the public. Also the positive - and still active - process of the adaptation of that land to controlled public use may come to a halt. It must be said that a great part of the water authorities' land was bought in the last century mainly to avoid undesirable activities in the catchment area of the reservoirs. Modern water filtering technology no longer requires the existence of large unused catchment areas so that an important part of the water authorities' land may in fact be declared as "non-operational land" and eventually sold. There is no efficient mechanism by which the Board may avoid undesirable activities such as conifer forestry. This was considered by the experts as a major risk to the area as it could affect negatively a considerable part of the park.

We found, however, that this threat could be turned to the advantage of the park if somehow the park's Board (or any of the other institutions involved, NCC or National Trust) would be assured a pre-emptive right to acquire land which is declared non-operational. Ideally this public land which is no longer needed for water supply purposes should be offered to the Board (before privatisation) at a symbolic price. In any case, enough guarantees have to be established if this land is not to change its present use, as that would be incompatible with the management standards expected in a Diploma holding site.

### PART III - CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The expert estimates that the values of the Peak District National Park have been not only maintained but in some cases considerably improved since the last renewal of the Diploma. Major threats to the landscape, in particular the extension of two limestone quarries, have been successfully averted. The new Park Plan places much greater emphasis than before on the need to conserve natural habitats. The integrated management approach which has been developed by the National Park Authority, using a wide range of conservation instruments and techniques, in particular the Farm Conservation Scheme, is probably unique. It is, therefore, recommended that the European Diploma awarded to the Park in Category C be renewed.

The Secretariat also estimates that the present management of the Peak District National Park is highly satisfactory and that its Board and the coordination of the different services working in its territory should be given credit for it. In the last five years there has been a substantial improvement in the attention accorded to wildlife conservation and in efforts for a more ecologically based farm management. While recommending the renewal of the European Diploma (Category C) for a further period of five years, it is felt that some threats should not be overlooked.

The following conditions and recommendations should, however, be attached to the renewal:

#### Conditions

1. The water recreation project for Bottoms Reservoir should be abandoned as it is not coherent with the characteristics of a European Diploma holding site.
2. Provision should be made in future legislation to ensure the long-term conservation of the ecological and landscape values of all lands included in the Park which are at present in the ownership of Water Authorities.
3.
  - i. Section 10 of the Town and Country Planning (Minerals) Act, which enables local planning authorities to serve orders prohibiting the resumption of mineral work where it appears permanently to have ceased, should be implemented as soon as practicable;
  - ii. Applications for extensions of existing works should be subject to the most rigorous examination and assessed against the need for the mineral in the national interest, the lack of alternative sources of supply and the environment impact.

#### Recommendations

1. Sufficient financial means should be made available to the National Park Authority to carry out detailed ecological surveys of all important wildlife habitats;

2. Sufficient financial means should be made available to the National Park Authority to carry out the review of mineral sites required under the Town and Country (Minerals) Act, 1981.
3. Serious consideration should be given to further increases in the funds available for improvement of management schemes and, where appropriate, land acquisition.