

DESIGNATION HISTORY SERIES

YORKSHIRE DALES NATIONAL PARK

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Origin

1. Proposals for a National Park in the highest and most scenic area of the Yorkshire Dales were first put forward, nationally, by Dr Vaughan Cornish, the geographer, Professor Patrick Abercrombie, the planner, and the Manchester and District Joint Town Planning Advisory Committee, in their evidence to the Ramsay MacDonald Government's National Park Committee, chaired by the Rt Hon Christopher Addison MP, MD, which presented its report (popularly known as the "Addison" Report) in April, 1931.¹ Dr Vaughan Cornish suggested the Ingleton-Kilnsey and Settle-Horton Gill areas (including Ingleborough and Pen-y-Ghent), while Professor Abercrombie also put forward Ingleborough and Pen-y-Ghent, but added Great Whernside and Swaledale. The Manchester and District Joint Town Planning Advisory Committee suggested the Malham area though with the Forest of Bowland.

2. No National Parks were designated as a result of the Addison Report, though, importantly, the lack of Government action led to establishment of the Standing Committee on National Parks (SCNP) by the Council for the Preservation of Rural England (CPRE), which put forward well-argued proposals on National Parks in its publication, "The Case for National Parks in Great Britain", was addressed to the Government in 1938.² Significantly for the future, John Dower, an architect/planner, was the Drafting Secretary of SCNP's publication. War intervened, but Government and its Committee on Land Utilisation in Rural Areas (1942), chaired by Lord Justice Scott, clearly supported SCNP's campaign, and requested John Dower to prepare an official report on National Parks in England and Wales. Dower's Report, published in 1945,³ contained a proposed National Park for the Craven Pennines (Wharfe, Aire and Ribble), covering 380 square miles, in his list of ten Division 'A' National Parks. In his Division 'B' list of Reserves for future National Parks, he included proposals for the Swaledale Pennines (with part of Wensleydale), covering 240 square miles, and the Howgill Fells (Upper Lune), covering 280 square miles (though this area is partly dealt with in this history, it is also covered in the separate history on the Howgills and Mallerstang⁴). Two areas in his Division 'C' list, Other Amenity Areas not suggested as National Parks, the Bowland Fells and the Nidderdale Pennines bordered the Craven Pennines to the west and east. (These areas will be dealt with in separate designation histories.)

3. Following from the Dower Report, the Government established its National Parks Committee (England and Wales), chaired by Sir Arthur Hobhouse, and including John Dower amongst its members. The Report of the National Parks Committee, known informally as the Hobhouse Report, was published in 1947⁵, and for the first time (at least in an official report) the term "Yorkshire Dales", was used to describe the proposed National Park in the area (covering 635 square miles), which headed the Second Instalment of Hobhouse's twelve National Parks. The Report included a description and map (Map 1) of the proposed National Park. Significantly, it excluded Dentdale and the Southern Howgills, despite these areas then being within the West Riding of Yorkshire. Unlike Dower, who had selected Dentdale and the Howgills as being of future National Park status, Hobhouse (whose landscape adviser was L J Watson, later to become the National Parks Commission senior landscape adviser) selected the Howgill Fells and Dentdale as a separate "conservation area", one of the fifty-two areas which he described in his Report as being of high landscape quality, scientific

interest, and recreational value, and thus deserving designation (though not as National Parks) and special planning and management measures to protect their natural beauty and interest. The Hobhouse Conservation Area for the Howgill Fells also included the Northern Howgills and Mallerstang (with the Upper Lune Valley and the Orton Fells), in the County of Westmorland.

4. It is interesting to see that Hobhouse, like Dower, did not judge the two areas on the eastern and western periphery of the Dales ie Forest of Bowland and Nidderdale, as being of national park status, even for the future, and included both areas in his list of fifty-two conservation areas (both peripheral areas would eventually become AONBs).

Designation History

5. The first priority of the National Parks Commission (NPC) established under the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act, 1949 (the 1949 Act) was to designate the National Parks in its programme⁶, based on the list of twelve National Parks⁵ in the Hobhouse Report. The Yorkshire Dales National Park proposal was not considered until late 1951, when their officers were requested to prepare the National Parks Designation Programme for 1952. At the December 1951⁷ meeting of the NPC this programme was agreed; the three Parks for 1952 being the Cornish Coast (A “Dower Report” National Park, soon to be dropped due to local opposition), Exmoor and the Yorkshire Dales. No priority among the three areas was set for designation, and it was also agreed that the decision should remain confidential at that time.

6. **The first Inspection of the Boundaries.** In March 1952⁸ arrangements were made for a visit to the Yorkshire Dales by Commissioners, between 13 and 18 June 1952, to consider the boundary of the proposed Park. The Commission party, Tom Stephenson, Mr Allen, Mrs Pauline Dower (John Dower’s widow), and Professor McLean, and Mr Rathbone (Assistant Secretary) and L J Watson (their Landscape Adviser, and previously the Landscape Adviser to the Hobhouse Committee) duly visited the Yorkshire Dales; and at the NPC meeting in July 1952⁹, Mr Stephenson gave the report on their visit.

7. Although the visit confirmed the view that the scenic qualities and recreational value of the Yorkshire Dales pre-eminently qualified the area as a National Park, a number of alterations were made to the boundary previously outlined by Hobhouse, not least of which was to include the whole of Dentdale and Southern Howgills, part of the West Riding, within the Park, rather than within a larger Howgill Fells Hobhouse conservation area, much of which was in the adjoining county of Westmorland. Unfortunately the author has not been able to discover any file or Committee papers relating to the reasoning behind this proposal for a north-western extension of the Park. He can only assume that the administrative convenience of having the whole of this north-western corner of the West Riding in the National Park, as well as its undoubted national park landscape quality, must have influenced the views of the visiting party. However, the above is just reasoned supposition, rather than proven fact, and there can be little doubt over the illogicality, in landscape terms, of the boundary finally chosen, which left the Northern Howgills, Barbon and Middleton Fells and Mallerstang (in Westmorland) and Leck Fell (in Lancashire) outside the park, and still, even today without any national landscape designation.

8. The visiting parties also (apparently) recommended the exclusion from the proposed Park of an area of moorland extending from the northern boundary of Arkengarthdale Moor to the A66 below Bowes Moor, and the exclusion of nine part moorland/part enclosed land parishes immediately to the west of Leyburn and East Witton (including the village of Middleham). Apparently too, the inspecting party reduced the area of Marske parish (part of the salient of the “Hobhouse” Park extending along Swaledale to the edge of Richmond) included in the Park, by removing Skelton Moor, and drawing the boundary along the Reeth - Richmond road, through Marske village.

9. Importantly the NPC endorsed the Inspecting Party’s views with regard to the boundary⁹, and authorised the preparation of draft maps for further action in due course. The draft map still followed the Hobhouse boundary in the south, but with the agreed modifications, differed substantially from Hobhouse in the north-west, and in the extreme north and east. The proposed Park still covered some 600 square miles, and like the ‘Hobhouse’ National Park was restricted to the administrative areas of the North and West Ridings of Yorkshire.

10. At the September 1952 NPC meeting¹⁰, it was reported that the Draft Designation Maps were available for statutory consultation purposes. However, before that process started, the NPC Chairman, Sir Patrick Duff, indicated that, as a matter of courtesy, he would write to the two County Councils (North and West Ridings) to inform them of the impending statutory consultation, and to offer to talk with them any time if they so wished. Previous informal contacts between the NPC and the two County Councils had indicated that both Councils were opposed to the idea of a Joint National Park Board administering the proposed Park, wanting a Joint Advisory Committee (JAC) instead, and full planning powers still being with the Councils. The question was further discussed at an informal meeting between the NPC and the West Riding CC in Leeds on 6 October 1952, but without any reconciliation of the differing views on the form of administration in the Park.

11. **Formal Consultation under Section 7(1) of the 1949 Act.** In October 1952 the 1 inch to the mile scale maps of the proposed designated area for the Yorkshire Dales National Park, together with the detailed written description of the boundary, were sent to the North Riding CC and the West Riding CC, the seven Rural District Councils (RDCs) affected ie Aysgarth, Leyburn, Reeth, Richmond, Sedburgh, Settle, and Skipton and the one Municipal Borough, Richmond MBC, requesting the Councils’ comments on the proposed designation and its boundaries.

12. At the same time, in accordance with the usual practice, followed with the designation of NP’s (but not required by statute), the NPC sent copies of the map and written description to the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries (MAF), the Nature Conservancy (NC), the Forestry Commission, the Ministry of Housing and Local Government (MHLG) (Branch LG2 dealing with local authority boundary matters), the Commissioners of Crown Lands, the National Trust, and the Council for Preservation of Rural England (CPRE - addressed to their Standing Committee for National Parks (SCNP)), and comments were requested.

13. It was not until the NPC meeting in January 1953¹¹ that the NPC were able to hear from Mr Stephenson his report on local authorities and organisations consulted, particularly their suggestions for boundary alterations.

14. The North Riding agreed to the proposed designation subject to the exclusion of the whole of the proposed national park in the Borough of Richmond, and also land lying within the parishes of Marske, Hudswell, Downholme, Marrick and Ellerton Abbey. As forewarned the County Council also made their support conditional to the whole area of the proposed Park being administered as at present by the two County Councils, but also with a JAC.

15. In the West Riding, the County Council sought the exclusion of the whole town of Settle, arguing that as an important industrial and market town it should be allowed to expand naturally without a special degree of planning control. The Council also sought further exclusions, to take out swathes of high quality agricultural land south of a line joining Otterburn, Airton, Winterburn, Hetton and Rylstone, and also around Halton, including the villages of Embsay and Halton itself. Two modest amendments involving the use of a road as a clearly defined boundary were suggested at Beamsley (in the extreme south-eastern corner of the proposed Park) and east of Ingleton. Like the North Riding, and again as forewarned, the West Riding CC also mentioned the question of the administration of the Park, making clear its view that a Joint Board would be inappropriate, and that adequate liaison over the whole Park could be achieved by the setting up of a JAC.

16. Richmond MBC made clear its objection to the inclusion of any of the Borough in the proposed Park, while for the Rural Districts, Richmond RDC requested the exclusion of the parishes of Marske, Hudswell and Downholme, while Sedburgh, Skipton and Reeth RDCs had not responded by the time of the January 1953 NPC meeting. Three RDCs - Settle, Aysgarth and Leyburn, replied that they had no comments to make .

17. No comments were received from any of the bodies, consulted under usual practice, rather than statute, except from Section LG2 of MHLG which reported that they were not aware of any proposed changes to local authority boundaries affecting the proposed park.

18. **The Second Inspection of the Boundaries following Consultation.** As it was agreed at the January 1953 NPC meeting that no recommendation on the precise boundaries would be made until the area had been revisited¹¹, a further inspection of the area, particularly to look at the amendments suggested by the consultees was arranged for 23-26 February 1953. The members of the Commission taking part were Mr Stephenson, Professor McLean, Mrs Dower and Mr Allen.

19. Mr Stephenson reported the findings of the survey party at the NPC meeting on 10 March 1953¹². Six amendments to the boundary, including some extensions to the boundary not previously shown on the consultation map, were recommended by the party¹².

20. *The first was to agree with the views of Richmond MBC and the North Riding CC that the small area of the proposed Park, within Richmond MB, Whitcliffe Wood should be removed from the Park.* However, the North Riding CC's proposal to remove all the parts of the five parishes forming a salient of the Park extending along Swaledale almost to Richmond ie Hudswell, Marske, Downholme, Marrick and Ellerton Abbey, was rejected, on landscape grounds by the survey party. A similar proposal by Richmond RDC to remove parts of Marske, Hudswell and Downholme Parishes from the Park was also rejected.

21. *The second was to extend the boundary in Leyburn Rural District to include a greater part of Coverdale, thus bringing into the Park Coverham Abbey, East Witton and*

Braithewaite Moor. Ironically this area had been included in the proposed Park by Hobhouse and had, apparently, been excluded from the Park by the June 1952 NPC survey party.

22. *The third recommendation was to exclude the villages of Embsay and Halton East in Skipton Rural District*, thus part-following the suggestion of the West Riding CC, which had sought the exclusions of the two villages and a larger area of moorland known as the Stank which extended as far north as Bolton Abbey. The NPC survey party rejected the exclusion of the wider area.

23. *The fourth recommendation from the survey party was to exclude a small area south of the village of Otterburn between Hellifield and Bell Busk in Settle Rural District*, once again only partly acceding to the West Riding CC's suggestion to exclude a much wider swathe of mainly high quality agricultural land. The proposal to exclude a much wider area following the road between Otterburn, Airton, Hetton and Rylstone, including the moorland of Flasby Fell was rejected by the survey party.

24. *The fifth recommendation was to exclude the town of Settle from the Park*, provided the high ground east of the town, including Castlebergh, was retained within the Park. The survey party here acceded to the view of the West Riding CC which had argued that Settle, as an important industrial and market town should be able to grow naturally without extra planning constraints.

25. *The sixth and final recommendation was for a slight boundary revision east of Ingleton*, involving the use of a road as a clearly defined boundary, which had been requested by the West Riding CC. A similar request by West Riding CC to use a road as a boundary at Beamsley was rejected by the survey party on the grounds that the boundary shown on the designation map followed an existing administrative boundary.

26. The NPC endorsed all six recommendations in Mr Stephenson's report, at their March 1953 meeting¹², and further agreed that the local authorities concerned with the additional territory now proposed by the NPC in the north-east of the Park should be consulted for their comments. (Consultation on additions to the designation map was, in any case, required by statute.) Unless further boundary revisions were made resulting from these comments then it was agreed that the preparation of the designation maps should proceed.

27. Significantly for the future, the Chairman, at the same meeting, drew the Commission's attention to the continuing opposition of the local authorities involved with the proposed Park to the setting-up of a Joint Planning Board for the Park.

28. In May 1953, one of the bodies, MAF, consulted in the previous October, by usual practice rather than statute, made an overdue response to the original consultation and to the new proposals. In their letter of 8 May, MAF said that they had no comment on the greater part of the proposed boundaries, including the Coverdale extension proposed in March 1953, but they did suggest the exclusion of four areas covering 10 square miles of generally low lying enclosed land at Austwick, Hellifield and Gargrave, and near Bolton Abbey, on the southern boundary of the proposed Park. MAF also suggested, though less strongly, the omission of a larger area (50 square miles) on the south-eastern corner of the Park, including Bolton Abbey and much of Lower Wharfedale. Unfortunately no maps have been discovered showing these areas, but clearly the four areas, covering 10 square miles, had a close affinity with, the swathes of improved land between Hellifield and Beamsley, suggested for exclusion

by the West Riding CC. The NPC's Committee dealing with the proposed Park (Committee A), which included the survey party visiting this very area in February, considered these late observations at their meeting on 11 May 1953¹³. They agreed that the scenic quality of these areas well merited their inclusion in the Park, and that no boundary amendment should be made. MAF were also reminded that NP designation did not, of itself, confer any additional right of access. After informally consulting with MHLG on the NPC's response to their observations MAF decided to await the formal submission of the designation order to MHLG before making any further comment on the boundary.

29. The local authorities consulted on the eastern extension (Coverdale) of the Park, agreed at the March 1953 NPC meeting, were not able to reach any views on this amendment until the end of July. On 6 August 1953 the Clerk of the North Riding CC wrote to the NPC explaining that, although their County Planning Committee had not objected to the extension, their Area Planning Sub-Committee had supported Leyburn RDC's objection to the Coverdale extension on the grounds of possible pollution of water-gathering grounds. He added that the County Planning Committee did not support that view. At the same time the Clerk mentioned that he was instructed to say that the County Council did not feel the time had yet arrived for designation of the Park, and that designation should await the Council gaining more experience of administering the recently confirmed North York Moors National Park (then entirely within the North Riding).

30. The Clerk's letter was included in Paper NPC/G/149¹⁴ considered by the NPC at their September 1953¹⁵ meeting. The Commission agreed that, following the reference to Leyburn RDC's objection in the North Riding Clerk's letter, the RDC should be asked whether they wished to press their objection (to the NPC) to the Coverdale extension. They should also be reminded of the Government view that fears about the pollution of water gathering grounds were misconceived and formed no valid reason against the inclusion of territory in a National Park.

31. At their meeting on 13 October 1953¹⁶ the NPC were told that following the sending of a letter to Leyburn RDC, the Council had replied that they were objecting (without stating any reason) to the inclusion of the Coverdale extension in the Yorkshire Dales National Park. The NPC agreed that they could not omit this choice area for insufficient reasons; and accordingly decided to proceed with the designation of the Park. At the same time the North Riding CC would be informed that while the Commission had given every consideration to the CC's request (made in their letter of 6 August) for deferring designation, they could not justify, in the circumstances, such a deferral. Paper NPC/G/155¹⁷ contains the NPC's letter of 14 October 1953 to the North Riding CC, written in accordance with the NPC's decision at their October meeting¹⁶, and the North Riding's reply of 2 November 1953¹⁷, indicating that in the event of the NPC proceeding with designation the County Council still reserved their right to object to the administration of the Park by a Joint Planning Board. This paper was circulated to Commissioners at their meeting on 10 November 1953¹⁸.

32. **NPC make Yorkshire Dales National Park Designation Order.** Also at their meeting on 10 November 1953¹⁸, the NPC formally approved the making of the Yorkshire Dales National Park Designation Order 1953, and authorised the affixing of the Commission's Seal to the Order. The Order, covering 680 square miles of land in the North and West Ridings of Yorkshire was duly signed by the Chairman, Sir Patrick Duff, and the Secretary, Harold Abrahams, and the NPC Seal affixed on 7 December 1953¹⁹.

33. In accordance with the statutory requirements of Schedule 1 of the 1949 Act the NPC gave notice²⁰, in the London Gazette, national and local newspapers, from 8 - 19 December 1953²¹, that the Order had been made and was about to be submitted to the Minister of Housing and Local Government for confirmation. Representations on the Order, copies of which, together with the designation map and the boundary description²², had been put on public deposit throughout the area affected, were to be made to MHLG by 23 January 1954. The Order was sent to the Rt Hon Harold Macmillan MP, then the Minister, on 5 January 1954.

34. A considerable number of objections and representations on the Yorkshire Dales National Park Designation Order were received by MHLG in January 1954, including objections from both the North and West Riding CCs, of Yorkshire and Leyburn Rural District Council, which as objections from local authorities made a public inquiry, or at least a public hearing, on the Order inevitable²³. By early March 1954 MHLG, after consultations with the NPC, the North Riding CC and the other objectors, made arrangements for the inquiry to be held at County Hall, Northallerton, on 13 May 1954, under one of their Senior Inspectors, W N Cortis MA, LRIBA.

35. Notice of the inquiry²⁴ was made by MHLG in late March 1954, both in the London Gazette, and locally, by public notice. Copies of the Order and the map were also put on public deposit in local authority offices throughout the area, and at the offices of the NPC.

36. MHLG also consulted with other Government Departments and bodies on the Order following the NPC's December 1953 notice of the signing and sealing of the Order and its submission to the Minister. The relevant MHLG file (P11/91808/3/4/5B Part 2) shows that no objections or adverse comments were received from the Departments and bodies consulted, with the exception of MAF, which maintained the objections and comments seeking the exclusion of some 60 square miles of mainly enclosed pasture land on the southern and south-eastern boundaries of the proposed Park, and referred to in paragraph 28 above. The MAF objection was to be dealt with at the public inquiry.

37. At their meeting on 13 April 1954²⁵, the first chaired by Lord Strang, Sir Patrick Duff's successor, the NPC discussed the question of its representation, other than by Counsel, at the public inquiry in May. They agreed, subject to Counsel's views, that it would not be necessary for affirmative evidence to be given by the NPC Chairman or any other member since the points to be made would be submitted by their Counsel, Ramsey Willis (a decision which was confirmed by Counsel in May). In the event, both the NPC Secretary, Harold Abrahams, and the new Chairman, Lord Strang, attended the inquiry, but not as witnesses. The Assistant Field Adviser, Mr Watkin, also attended, but only in order to give evidence if necessary on boundary or other technical matters. All three would, of course, also have given informal private advice to Mr Ramsay Willis at the inquiry. (It is interesting to note that the Inspector's Report (folio 26) indicates that there were complaints that the NPC itself had given no evidence).

38. **The Public Inquiry 13 May 1954** Folios 26 (The Report of Inspector on the Inquiry²⁶) and 27 (the decision letter dated 8 October 1954 from MHLG²⁷) give the full story and cannot be improved upon, and should be read by all serious researchers of the designation of the Yorkshire Dales National Park.

39. In summary, however, the objections and representations (though not in the order of the objection or representation number used for the inquiry) are set out below:

Objection No 2 North Riding CC. The main arguments of the CC centred on the championing of their abilities to control development, via the provisions of the development plan within the area of the proposed National Park; that nothing would be gained by setting up a National Park; that the setting up of a planning board would be a waste of money and a suitable administrative centre would be hard to find; that there would be a danger that the public would believe it had unrestricted rights of access within the national park; and finally the argument that in the event of designation, the improved land in the Dales should be excluded.

Objection (sic) No 8 West Riding CC - although the CC had not registered a formal objection, they pursued their representation at the inquiry using similar arguments against the Park's designation to those made by the North Riding, though less vehemently.

Objection No 7, Leyburn RDC - The RDC maintained their objection for the exclusion of a large area (unfortunately a map showing the area cannot be discovered) covering much of Coverdale, on the grounds of feared pollution of water gathering grounds.

Objection No 4, Mr J A Hirst and Objection No 5, Bradford City Angling Association - these two objectors supported the two County Councils in objecting to administration by a Joint Planning Board for the Park; they repeated the North Riding's arguments about the unnecessary cost of the proposal, and shared the agricultural industry's views about fear that the proposal would bring unlimited public access.

Objection No 3, Seven hundred and fifty farmers - Their arguments against the proposal centred on their fears about increased public access, trespass, damage to walls, and an increased litter problem. They also supported the County Councils' views on the Park being unnecessary in view of the adequacy of existing planning arrangements and the extra costs which would be imposed on the public. A particular point was made about the way in which the Park proposal conflicted with many existing Agricultural Schemes which had already cost public money, especially in the intensively farmed land of the Dales themselves.

Objection No 6, Lord Bolton - Lord Bolton also repeated the views that intensively farmed land, including attested farms, was not suitable for designation as part of a National Park. He also doubted whether access could be controlled; and generally wanted reconsideration of the boundaries.

Representation No 2, CPRE and SCNP concerned their belief that the Park was too small and needed designation as a matter of urgency. Both bodies rejected the County Councils' views that existing arrangements for planning were adequate, and their fears relating to public access.

Representation No 9, The Ramblers' Association - the Association argued strongly that the Yorkshire Dales should be accessible for all who sought "healthy and harmless" recreation in the countryside, and that a Joint Board should be established

immediately. They also argued that the problems of litter and damage, caused by a minority, including locals as well as visitors, would not be solved by not creating a National Park.

Representation No 10, The Youth Hostels' Association (YHA) - The YHA, like the other national amenity bodies, argued that one body should administer the Park; that its 12 hostels in the Park were used by 50,000 persons; that, contrary to the arguments put by some local authorities and agricultural interests, it was never the Government's intention to exclude pastoral and farmed valleys from National Parks, and that the Park would bring prosperity to Dales people.

Representation No 11, Skipton Chamber of Trade and Representation No 12, Cave Research Group - These bodies contended that the Park would bring nothing but good to trade in the Dales, by attracting visitors including cavers.

40. The NPC Counsel, Mr Ramsay Willis, made a closing statement which summarised, for the Commission, their views on the various objections and representations made, and these are most comprehensively recorded in Folio 27. Briefly, the main points of the statement were as follows - that matters of cost and administration were consequential on confirmation of the Designation Order and not for decision at this stage; that anglers should not fear that designation meant unlimited access; neither should farmers and landowners fear more trespass with National Park designation; and this fear should not prevent the Minister from including agricultural land in the Park if the landscape was of National Park quality; and that Leyburn RDC's fears about pollution of water gathering grounds by public access was not supported by the Minister in 1951, who in his letter confirming the Peak District National Park Designation Order had said that public access to gathering grounds did no damage.

41. The author does not propose to repeat the Inspector's most comprehensive consideration of the various objections, representations and arguments made at the inquiry - these are set out in Section IV, Observations and Recommendations of his Report to the Minister (Folio 26). His final recommendation to the Minister was that he considered that the area included in the NPC's Yorkshire Dales National Park (Designation) Order, 1953, complied with the requirements of the 1949 Act, and that he therefore recommended that the Order should be confirmed.

42. **Confirmation of the Order** . The Assistant Secretary at MHLG, Mr E H T Wiltshire sent a letter dated 9 October 1954 (Folio 27) to the Secretary of the NPC, Harold Abrahams, informing the NPC that after careful consideration of the Inspector's Report and all other relevant factors, the Minister of Housing and Local Government, Harold Macmillan, had decided to confirm the Order without modification.

43. Mr Wiltshire's letter, setting out the Minister's views, and his decision, dealt in some detail with the Minister's views on the formal objections to the Order from the North Riding of Yorkshire CC, Leyburn RDC, and the large number of farmers from the Northern Dales, and also on the representation from the West Riding of Yorkshire County Council. He also considered these objections and representation against the stated views of the NPC and its supporters.

44. He referred to the farmers' objection, supported by the North Riding CC, to the inclusion in the Park of purely agricultural land, especially in Wensleydale and Swaledale,

largely enclosed and intensively farmed, where a tuberculosis eradication scheme was about to come into operation. This objection was based on fears of trespass and damage; an objection which had been made to the designation of other National Parks, and one which the NPC constantly had in mind, and hoped to remove through their campaign for better manners and greater understanding on the part of visitors. The letter went on to say that National Park designation, of itself, did not give the public any rights of access which did not already exist and experience in the six existing National Parks did not indicate any increased trespass or damage. Moreover, confining the Park to the uplands would remove some of the most attractive scenery in the Dales. For all these reasons, the letter stated, the Minister could not justify exclusion of these areas of agricultural land from the Park.

45. On Leyburn RDC's objection, the letter states that the Minister was advised that generally public access to gathering grounds did not damage them and he could not accept that an area be excluded from a Park merely because it was a gathering ground.

46. The letter then dealt with the North Riding of Yorkshire CC's views, and the similar views of the West Riding CC, that designation was unnecessary and costly and would complicate local administration. The North Riding CC believed it had administered the area with great care and had safeguarded its future through the development plan provisions. Additionally the West Riding CC believed that because (in its view) the two Ridings were divided by a high moorland barrier, it would be difficult to find a central administrative centre for the National Park.

47. The letter quoted the NPC's and its supporters' argument that the area, both moorland and agricultural dale, was clearly of national park quality, and already a favourite resort for visitors of all classes, particularly from the surrounding industrial areas - the high amenity of the area was more than merely local interest and should be recognised by making it a National Park. This was also the Minister's view, and after careful consideration of the Inspector's Report and other relevant factors, he decided to confirm the Order without modification.

48. The area as confirmed, covering 680 square miles of the North and West Ridings of Yorkshire, is shown on the map with Folio 28²⁸; and as described, without modification, in the written description of the boundary accompanying the Designation Order as submitted (Folio 22) to MHLG in January 1954.

49. One final legal hurdle remained before the confirmed Order could fully come into operation. Under paragraph 3 of Schedule 1 in the 1949 Act, the NPC published, on 12 October 1954, a notice²⁹ (Folio 29) stating that the Order had been confirmed by the Minister, following a public inquiry, and a further notice³⁰, (Folio 30) dated 15 November 1954, also referring to the confirmation of Order, but stating where the Order was on public deposit (the County Council and Rural District Council Offices in the area, and the NPC offices in London). Importantly, the second notice stated that the Order would become operative as from 16 November 1954, but also said, as required by statute, that if any party aggrieved by the Order desired to question its validity, that party could, within six weeks from the date of publication of the notice (15 November 1954) make an application to the High Court. Though folios in the MHLG file, P11/91808/3/4/5B Part 2 indicate that informal consideration was given by the Clerks of both the North and West Ridings, to take a case to the High Court questioning the validity of the Order, in the event, no application was made.

Both Councils, as related below, maintained their strong opposition to the setting up of a Joint Board.

50. Administration - Establishment of the Yorkshire Dales National Park Joint Advisory Committee and the West and North Riding National Park Committees.

Following Section 8(1) of the 1949 Act, which required local planning authorities to consult with the NPC on the administrative arrangements for the National Park within three months after the designation order had come into operation, the West and North Riding County Councils wrote in December to the NPC requesting a meeting to discuss administration. The meeting was held on 27 January 1955, but no further discussion took place pending the receipt of proposals for administration from the two County Councils, both of whom maintained their previous representations that the Minister should issue a direction (under Section 8(2) of the 1949 Act) that instead of a Joint Planning Board, a Joint Advisory Committee should be established. Eventually the County Councils consulted the NPC in May 1955 on their proposals for a JAC and also asked the Minister to issue an order for a JAC under Section 8(2) of the 1949 Act. The NPC gave their views on the arrangements for a JAC, but made it clear that they reserved their decision as to what advice they would give the Minister when he formally consulted them on an Order setting up administrative arrangements for the Park.

51. After further consultations with the NPC and the local authorities from mid-1955 - to March 1956 and meetings with, and between, both bodies, a letter from MHLG dated 27 March 1956 indicated (Appendix C 1955-56 Report³¹) that the Minister had carefully considered the points made by the various parties, and had decided to issue a direction under the proviso to Section 8(2) of the 1949 Act dispensing with the formation of a Joint Board for the two-County National Park. The letter makes it very clear that, in making this decision, the Minister, The Rt Hon Duncan Sandys MP (who had succeeded Harold Macmillan in 1955) doubted the force of the arguments by the two Ridings against a Joint Board on the supposed division of the Park into two parts, and on the lack of a central administrative centre, to be expected given the nature of National Parks, but believed the argument relating to costs had more force at that time, when any additional expenditure however small needed to be avoided or postponed. The direction thus postponed the formation of a Joint Board, and was subject to review in three years' time.

52. With this decision the NPC soon agreed the arrangements proposed by the Counties for the two separate County Park Committees³², and for the Yorkshire Dales National Park JAC³². The JAC was set up by an agreement between the two Ridings and approved by MHLG. The date of its constitution was 30 September 1957, which was also the date of its inaugural meeting. The JAC had eighteen members, of whom twelve were appointed in equal numbers by the constituent County Councils, and six (nominated by the Minister, at the suggestion of the NPC) appointed by the County Councils jointly. It was to meet at least four times a year, and its duties were to advise the two County Councils in the exercise of their town and country planning and National Park functions, and to consider what actions needed to be taken in the fulfilment of these functions. Particular matters which referred to the JAC for advice by the two separate Park Committees were preparation or alteration of development plans, developments by statutory undertakers or local authorities, mineral or industrial developments (including industrial buildings over 5000 square feet) injuring the amenity of the Park, Government Department developments, proposals affecting areas of special advertisement control, compensation matters, and anything (!?) requested by the NPC.

53. The two County Council Park Committees had the powers and duties, within the National Park areas, conferred on the County Councils under the various Town and Country Planning Acts and the 1949 Act, subject to receiving advice from the JAC under the agreement referred to above. Both Committees were separate Committees of the respective County Councils, and had 18 members, six of whom were appointed by the respective County Councils on the nomination of the Minister. The West Riding Park Committee had its first meeting on 11 April 1957, while the North Riding Park Committee first met on 17 July 1957.

54. Despite MHLG's letter of March 1956 suggesting that the setting up of a Joint Board was merely postponed for financial reasons, the two separate Park Committees and the National Park JAC continued to function without change after the review date (1959), and again after a second review in 1962, for yet a further three years to 1965. No further reference has been found to MHLG review of the original direction of March 1956 dispensing with the formation of a Joint Board; and the administrative arrangements established in 1957 for the National Park continued until the end of March 1974, when the new arrangements for establishment of the National Park Committee under Schedule 17 of the Local Government Act 1972 came into operation.

55. **Proposals for extensions of the Park in Nidderdale and Bowland 1962-63.** In November 1962³³ the County Planning Officer of the West Riding, Arthur Bates, wrote informally (after discussing the proposal with Sir Bernard Kenyon, the Clerk to the County Council, the West Riding National Park Committee and the JAC) to the NPC to test their reaction to a proposal to extend the National Park to take within the boundaries of the Park, the areas which Hobhouse, in 1947, had included in his list of conservation areas. His proposal was inspired by the thought of a larger National Park within the framework of the national motorway system with a ring of first class hotel towns around it. The NPC considered this suggestion at their November 1962 meeting³⁴, and in line with advice given to another National Park authority, agreed that the County Planning Officer should be reminded that the Minister of Housing and Local Government exercised the power to extend National Parks, not the NPC - he would have needed very strong arguments for the extension and should have certainly required the proposed areas to satisfy the National Park criteria set out in Section 5 of the 1949 Act.

56. This NPC view did not deter the County Planning Officer taking the proposal to both the West Riding National Park Committee and the JAC in January 1963, and both Committees asked him to obtain the views of all the Districts affected and the NPC. Mr Bates's letter of 21 March 1963³⁵ to the NPC covers the West Riding Park Committee's views, and also raises the questions of detailed boundaries including a case for taking the Bowland extension across the Lancashire border. However, Folio 10 of NPC file YD/1/22 indicates that by July 1963, given the strong protests to the proposals made by the Districts affected (reported by the West Riding Clerk to the NPC Secretary, Mr Bell), that both the West Riding and the NPC decided to put the proposal into cold storage.

57. The eventual designation of the Forest of Bowland as an AONB in 1964 removed this area from further consideration as an extension to the National Park, but the West Riding National Park Committee, and its successor Yorkshire Dales National Park Committee did not entirely relinquish its dormant claims (see also paras. 62-64) over Nidderdale until 1988, enabling the Countryside Commission able to start formally preparing the designation order for the Nidderdale AONB in 1990.

58. **The Yorkshire Dales National Park Committee 1974-1996** Following an agreement between the Countryside Commission and the then Association of County Councils, Schedule 17 of the Local Government Act 1972 (which came into force on 1 April 1974) required the County Councils (except in the cases of the Lake District and the Peak District, where the two autonomous Boards remained) to establish single National Park Committees for each Park. These Committees had “development control” and “countryside” functions delegated to them, and had statutory duties to appoint a National Park Officer and to prepare a National Park Plan. The Act also provided for major funding of National Parks by the Government through the National Park Supplementary Grant (NPSG), which accounted for 75% of Park expenditure. Twenty-five per cent of the Parks’ expenditure came from the local authorities, though because of the rate support mechanism, monies coming from rural local authorities with small populations was often less and central Government’s contribution correspondingly higher than 75%. Two-thirds of National Park Committee members were appointed by the local authorities, with numbers subject to agreement between them, while one-third were appointed by the Secretary of State for the Environment, following nomination by the Countryside Commission, which succeeded the NPC in 1968.

59. The Yorkshire Dales National Park Committee was a Committee of North Yorkshire CC (which, following Local Government re-organisation consequent upon the 1972 Act, had taken over the old West Riding section of the Park with the exception of Dentdale and the Northern Howgills which were taken into the new County of Cumbria). 12 members of the Committee were appointed by North Yorkshire CC, and one by Cumbria CC, while three members represented the new District Councils of Craven, Richmondshire and South Lakeland. The Secretary of State appointed eight members. The first National Park Officer was Richard Harvey, and the offices of the Park Department were split between Bainbridge in Wensleydale, and Grassington in Wharfedale, locations which reflected the historic North Riding - West Riding partition of the park.

60. **National Park Boundary Review.** Though the 1972 Act had strengthened the administration and resources of the National Parks, including the Yorkshire Dales, the power to vary the boundaries of the Parks under the 1949 Act still (as seen above in para. 55) remained with the appropriate Minister; the Countryside Commission (as the 1968 successor to the NPC) merely had to be consulted on any boundary changes initiated by the Minister. There had only been two such variation orders, both in Wales, affecting Snowdonia and the Brecon Beacons. In England the boundaries of all seven National Parks had remained unchanged.

61. Following on from one of the recommendations of the Government’s 1972 National Parks Committee (chaired by Lord Sandford), Section 45 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, gave the Countryside Commission the power to prepare National Park boundary variation orders, subject to Ministerial confirmation. Taking advantage of this new power the Commission prepared, in consultation with the National Park Authorities, a programme of national park boundary reviews.

62. Commission Paper 84/70³⁶ describes the programme in some detail, and for the Yorkshire Dales reflects the matters raised at an informal meeting held in May 1984 between Richard Harvey, the National Park Officer, Dr Sally Bucknall, the Commission’s Yorkshire and Humberside Regional Officer, and the author of this history, then the Commission’s Senior Planning Officer responsible for preparing the programme³⁷. Future action was

proposed on the Northern Howgills and Mallerstang areas, which the Commission, in rejecting their inclusion in the North Pennines AONB in 1975, had considered as of undoubted national park landscape quality, and had given a clear commitment to the Yorkshire Dales national park authority to review the possibility of including the areas within the Park before any further proposals for AONB designation were considered. A similar commitment had been given with respect to the Nidderdale area (a proposal to bring that area into the Park had been put on ice in 1963 - see paras. 55-57) and the Commission's 1983 AONB Policy Statement had indicated that a proposal to create a Nidderdale Moors AONB would not be the subject of any action until the Commission, in consultation with the National Park, had reviewed the possibility of including that area within the Park.

63. At the meeting it was established that there was much less political support for the proposal bringing the Nidderdale Moors into the Park, than for the proposal to include the Northern Howgills and Mallerstang. The medium priority date for action (1988) was set because it was then believed the national issues associated with the Northern Howgills and Mallerstang could only be reasonably considered after the Government had reached a decision following the public inquiry on the North Pennines AONB designation order in 1985. The only other major boundary changes considered at the May 1984 meeting related to Leck Fell in Lancashire, and Barbon Fell in Cumbria, areas which were both scenically and physically part of the Yorkshire Dales landscape. Though the author had already proposed a boundary which would have included these areas in the Park early in 1983, it was believed that there would be some opposition to this proposal, particularly from the local authorities, and it was given a much lower priority for action than the need to reach a decision on the future of the Northern Howgills and Mallerstang. As expected, by 1988 the Yorkshire Dales National Park Committee relinquished their territorial interest in the Nidderdale Moors, and that area was finally confirmed as an AONB in 1994.

64. No work was started on the Yorkshire Dales National Park Boundary Review, and the whole programme was brought to an abrupt end in the early 1990s because the two completed reviews for the Pembrokeshire Coast and Dartmoor had consumed too much in terms of staff and financial resources. No changes were therefore made to the existing boundaries of the Yorkshire Dales National Park as confirmed on 9 October 1954 though a re-measurement of the area in 1992 set the area of the Park as 683 square miles or 1,769 square kilometres.

65. **The Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority April 1996.** In accordance with the provisions of Part III of the Environment Act 1995, applying to all National Parks in England and Wales, a new Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority (completely free-standing from North Yorkshire and Cumbria County Councils) having full planning and management powers, and with Richard Harvey continuing as National Park Officer, replaced the 1974 Yorkshire Dales National Park Committee. In effect, the NPC's strongly held views that the Yorkshire Dales deserved the free-standing status of a National Park Board were at last achieved, in full, in 1996, over 42 years after the designation of the National Park had been confirmed. On the retirement of Richard Harvey in late 1996, George Hallas took over as National Park Officer until early 1998 when he himself retired and was succeeded by Heather Hancock. In 2000 David Butterworth took over as Chief Executive of the National Park.

66. **Future Changes.** In the forty-eight years which have elapsed since the Yorkshire Dales National Park Designation Order was confirmed on 9 October 1954, the boundaries of the Park have remained unchanged. Nevertheless it is clear that some

non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and individuals consider the exclusion of the Northern Howgills and Mallerstang from the Park to be wholly indefensible, not just because of these areas' long-acknowledged national park landscape quality but also because of the recent major development threats posed to any undesignated uplands by wind farm developers. In 1998, the then Director-General of the Countryside Commission, Richard Wakeford (now Chief Executive of the Commission's successor body, the Countryside Agency), described the proposals to bring Mallerstang and the Northern Howgills into the Yorkshire Dales National Park as "unfinished business". Whether these proposals and the other proposals like the inclusion of Barbon and Leck Fells, raised by the Commission at the start of the ill-fated 1980's National Parks Boundary Review, are ever implemented will depend on the strength of support which NGOs and individuals can enlist. Only the strongest argument, including evidence of major development threats, and the support of the National Park itself and the local authorities involved, would be likely to overcome the reluctance of the Countryside Agency and the Government to use the major resources of staff and monies which would be needed to prepare the Orders required and to set up the inevitable public inquiry. Hopefully the recommendation made in the recent Review of English National Park Authorities (2002) conducted by the Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA), for the Countryside Agency (with DEFRA) to investigate the streamlining of the statutory process for National Park boundary review may lead to legislative changes which could enable boundary change without the major use of staff and financial resources.

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Folios

All the references listed above are included as folios with the black-bound copies of this history (one copy in the Library at the Yorkshire Dales National Park Offices, and the other in the Resource Centre at the Countryside Agency offices, at John Dower House, Cheltenham), and also with the ring-bound copies. Stapled copies do not include the 37 folios, though list the references to them.

Maps

- Map 1 - "5. Yorkshire Dales" National Park, Hobhouse Report (Ref 5)
- Map 2 - "National Parks and Conservation Areas" including North Pennines, Howgill Fells, Forest of Bowland and Nidderdale Moors as well as Yorkshire Dales National Park, Hobhouse Report (Ref 5).
- Map 3 - "Yorkshire Dales National Park", 5th Annual Report of the National Parks Commission 1954.

Files consulted

Title	NPC or CC No	PRO No
Yorkshire Dales, Designation	YD/1	COU 1/908
Yorkshire Dales, Designation Stage 1, Draft Map	YD/1/1	COU 1/838
Yorkshire Dales, Stage II Making & Display of Order	YD/1/2	COU 1/841
Yorkshire Dales, Designation Press Notice	YD/1/2/Pt 2	COU 1/842
Yorkshire Dales, Designation Public Inquiry	YD/1/2/1	COU 1/845
Yorkshire Dales, Designation Confirmation	YD/1/2/2	COU 1/11108
Yorkshire Dales, Designation West Riding CC	YD/1/4	COU 1/839
Yorkshire Dales, Designation North Riding of Yorkshire CC	YD/1/8	COU 1/840
Yorkshire Dales/Designation Objection No 3 by Messrs Freeman, Son & Curry on behalf of various farmers	YH/1/4	COU 1/844
Yorkshire Dales, Designation Objection No 2, West Riding CC	YD/1/18	COU 1/843
Yorkshire Dales Extension of National Park	YD/1/22	COU 1/846
Yorkshire Dales Administration	YD/2	COU 1/848
National Park Boundaries Variation Orders	DL/19A, B & C - renumbered 1536	COU 6/292
Nidderdale Moors, Proposed AONB Designation	V/143/8738A	
	MHLG File No	
National Parks & Access to the Countryside Act, National Parks Yorkshire	91808/3/4/5A	HLG/92/25

Dales 1950-2		
National Parks & Access to the Countryside Act, National Parks, Yorkshire Dales National Park (Designation) Order 1952-3	91808/3/4/5B Part 1	HLG/92/26
Title	MHLG File No	PRO No
Yorkshire Dales National Park Designation Order 1954	P11/91808/3/4/5B Part 2	HLG 92/134