



Your National Park needs you



“Everything we do, we do it with you,” could be the theme song of the Peak District National Park Authority. For the National Park is a precious asset, and all those who live or work here, or visit and enjoy its beauty, can contribute to its future.

The Authority speaks up for the National Park, and works to safeguard its special qualities, its landscapes, wildlife, traditional towns and villages, and its social and economic well-being. But we cannot do it on our own: in this edition of Parklife, we highlight how our work goes hand in hand with local people.

In the last edition, Parklife featured our national campaign – supported by local action groups – for stronger powers to control quarrying. Since then we have had a ministerial visit to Backdale Quarry, we held a massively-attended public meeting, served stop notices, and received extra Government backing to help pursue a solution through the legal system.

In addition, high-level talks are ongoing with the Government, and local MP Patrick McLoughlin, the opposition chief whip, has raised the issue in the Commons.

But it is important to recognise that quarrying has long been part of the Peak District. We have a careful balancing act – our number one priority is to safeguard the Park’s landscape and environment, which means trying to reduce the impact of quarrying – but the Peak District’s economy and employment are also an important factor. Turn to page 6 for more about a quarry company which balances its commercial concerns with a commitment to the environment.

Traffic is another big pressure on the National Park: in defence of the landscape and environment, we have taken a stand against a bypass scheme, agreeing with many local campaigners that alternative solutions should be fully explored – see Page 3.

Elsewhere in Parklife you can read about caring for wildlife and history, restoring habitats and important landscapes, supporting businesses, working with communities, schools and volunteers, and encouraging visitors from all backgrounds.

This is our everyday work – it’s who we are, what we do – and we do it with you.

Tony Hams,

Chair, Peak District National Park Authority

- To find out more about our work against targets, have a look at our Best Value Performance Plan. Visit www.peakdistrict.gov.uk or contact Customer Services on 01629 816200



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About Parklife

Parklife is the free community magazine of the Peak District National Park Authority. The twice-yearly Parklife replaces the former annual Peakland Post newspaper and focuses more on the big issues facing the Park’s future – however, if you would like more information about events, activities and tourism, log on to www.visitpeakdistrict.com or contact information centres listed on the back page.

The next issue of Parklife will be out in January 2007. You can also read Parklife on www.peakdistrict.gov.uk and copies are available in large print or audio cassette. Our contact details are on Page 15.

- Parklife was recently shortlisted as the country’s best local authority publication.



A628 - Authority says “think again” on bypass scheme

Over the past 20 years traffic has doubled on main roads across the Peak District – and the people who live alongside them suffer noise, pollution and congestion every day.

Mottram, Hollingworth and Tintwistle lie on a notorious bottle-neck on the A57 and A628 through Longdendale which carries 40,000 vehicles a day, and the Highways Agency proposes a 5.7km bypass to relieve them.

Why, then, does the National Park Authority – which has in the past supported the principle of a bypass – oppose the £112.5m project?

It believes the current proposal:

- **would cause cross-Park traffic to rise significantly – by 133% on the A628 east of Tintwistle 2001-2025** (Highways Agency forecast)
- **would have a severe impact on the landscape, pollution, ecology, tranquillity and access to highly-significant wildlife areas in the National Park.**
- **may not be the best way of addressing the problem.**

One internationally-important wildlife area at risk is the Dark Peak moorland – a Special Area of Conservation, Special Protection Area and Site of Special Scientific Interest. Increased traffic would also deter use of four national walking, riding and cycling trails.

Of particular concern is that trans-Pennine traffic would be drawn from the heavily-used M62.

Alternatives include a lorry-ban combined with a comprehensive public transport package that included both bus and rail.

A Public Inquiry will decide the issue in the new year.

The Highways Agency has received 1,400 objections & 1,000 letters of support.

Further details:

Highways Agency Information Line
08457 504030.

www.highways.gov.uk

National Park Authority:
transport@peakdistrict.gov.uk



Tranquillity and access to national trails under threat

Local opinion divided



FOR the bypass -

Michael Flynn, chairman, Longdendale Siege Committee

“The bypass is the only proposal that will deal with the traffic effectively.

“We are as keen as anyone that the countryside should have minimum disruption, but the environment people live in is more important.

“The bypass would relieve congestion on the A628 and the A57 through Glossop -30,000 vehicle movements a day originate there. A lorry-ban wouldn’t affect that and we’d get additional cars using a lorry-free A628.

I’ve been campaigning for 25 years and the residents have been suffering all that time. We believe the bypass would benefit not only the residents but the economy of the National Park as well.”

www.longdendalebypass.co.uk

AGAINST the bypass

Emma Lawrence, Save Swallows Wood campaign



“For many years councillors and MPs have focused on the bypass as the only solution. All villagers know the traffic can be bad at certain times of day, as it is everywhere, but many of us are not prepared to pay the price that comes with a bypass. We believe the following alternatives should be explored:

- *weight limits for traffic throughout the National Park*
- *traffic calming in residential areas, safe routes to school and travel-to-work plans*
- *integrated, discounted bus/train services, and improvements for pedestrians and cyclists*
- *re-examine the proposal to re-open the Woodhead rail line*

The villages’ proximity to open countryside should be protected for future generations - to ruin that is to destroy the character of the villages irreparably.”

www.saveswallowswood.org.uk

Photos courtesy of Glossop Chronicle (Michael Flynn) and Glossop Advertiser (Emma Lawrence)



Wildlife the winner as communities help action plan

All over the Peak District, villagers, schoolchildren, farmers, landowners and businesses are helping regenerate wildlife habitats in their area.

As a result, ponds are being restored, scrub cleared, wildflowers sown, bird and bat-boxes installed, wildlife-friendly farming encouraged and woodlands re-invigorated.

All this work contributes toward the National Park's 10-year Biodiversity Action Plan (2000-2010), which is beginning to show heartening results, thanks largely to partnerships with local communities, land-managers and environmental organisations.



Volunteers help restore a dew pond near Ashford-in-the-Water — these important habitats had declined by two-thirds before the National Park's Vision Project launched a restoration programme. (Picture by Peter Wardle)

The moors

On the large scale, the percentage of nationally important wildlife sites (Sites of Special Scientific Interest or SSSIs) in favourable or recovering condition has risen from 28% in 2003 to 46% by early 2006, mostly as a result of action on moorlands.

On its own land, the Authority has achieved a remarkable upturn: the 2,505-hectare Eastern Moors Estate, which borders Sheffield, was 84% favourable or recovering by early this year — up from 42.5% two years before.



University of the Third Age group spreading haymeadow seed at Gt Longstone

Heather is being regenerated and invasive purple molina grass kept down by grazing cattle. Sheep, which would eat the heather, have been reduced by agreement with the tenant-farmers.

Birds, water-voles, dragonflies and other species are being attracted by restoration of bog eco-systems, curlew and snipe are attracted by creation of shallow muddy pools and birch scrub is being cleared.

Farmland, Woodland & Dales

Elsewhere, joint projects such as Ravine WoodLIFE (managed by English Nature) are restoring important areas such as Monsal Dale, selectively-felling sycamores which provide deadwood habitats for longhorn beetles, treecreepers and bats, and favouring regeneration of native species such as ash.

The Peak Birds Project (with the RSPB) is working with farmers to create habitats where declining upland birds such as curlew, lapwing and twite can flourish.



Good progress

National Park ecology manager Rhodri Thomas said: "At just over the halfway point through the 10-year Biodiversity Action Plan, we have made good progress in many respects. Partnerships are hugely-important, and it's thanks to them that we have achieved many improvements, for instance in ash woodland, moorland and pond restoration, and water vole recovery (with the Derbyshire Wildlife Trust). We are immensely grateful for the goodwill of landowners, without whom these wildlife benefits could not be achieved.

"We still have some way to go on certain habitats, particularly to ensure that wildlife-friendly management is a financially viable and attractive option for landowners, but we hope to continue the success of area-based campaigns such as the Vision Project, in which the communities have become very important players."

- Read the Biodiversity Action Plan on www.peakdistrict.gov.uk/bap



Ecology manager, Rhodri Thomas

Vision for wildlife: the future's brighter

What do water voles, brown hares, pipistrelles, skylarks, pink waxcap and great crested newts have in common?

They are all among priority species being helped by the Vision for Wildlife Project.

Started in 2002, the Vision Project covers 35 sq km of the central White Peak (limestone) area, and last year was extended into parts of the adjacent Dark Peak (gritstone) area.

It aims to:

- Conserve and enhance existing high wildlife-value areas
- Link and expand these by restoring habitats in between
- Provide opportunities for local communities to get involved.

Communities involved in the Vision Project include Calver, Curbar, Eyam, Foolow, Froggatt, Gt Hucklow, Gt & Little Longstone, Hassop, Litton, Ashford-in-the-Water, Stoney Middleton, Taddington, Wardlow, Bradwell, Grindleford and Abney.



Village bird watch

“The natural thing to do”

John Bacon and Tony Botham both worked at Calver Mill and have always been interested in the wildlife of the adjacent River Derwent.

So when the Vision Project involved itself in restoring wildlife habitats at Calver Marshes, John and Tony were among the first to volunteer.

“It seemed the natural thing to do,” said John, “We wanted to help, and we wanted to show that local people are concerned about the area’s wildlife.”

Tony, who leads bird-watching walks, said: *“We’ve been monitoring birds here for many years, and we’re pleased that in partnership with local people, the Vision Project is putting so much effort into the site.”*

Action has included:

- Pond-restoration and creation, attracting water voles, dragonflies and damselflies
- Bird and bat-boxes installed by Curbar and Lady Manners pupils, local people and rangers. Fencing to protect brook lamprey and water vole.
- Invasive Himalayan balsam cleared by rangers, Lady Manners Green Group and locals.
- Rare species such as yellow loosestrife monitored by the Lady Manners Green Group.
- Information panels developed with Curbar School children. (right)
- Awareness-raising walks led by the Vision Project, local people and Sorby Natural History Society.

Locals have now formed an informal management group to look after the area, and set up the Calver Weir Restoration Fund, raising funds to repair the weir on which the wetland habitats depend: visit www.calverweir.org.uk



Tony Botham (left) & John Bacon.



Spot the signs for Road Verge Reserves

Around 20 new wildflower reserves are being set up in the National Park this year – and they are all simply by the side of the road.

Residents and landowners helped identify flower-rich verges, and the National Park Authority is working with Derbyshire County Council, Derbyshire Wildlife Trust and volunteers to help manage them.

Road verge reserves are important because they help save flowers and plants that have been gradually declining over the past 50 years, including meadow cranesbill, ox-eye daisy or field scabious, rarer species, such as orchids, plus insects, birds and mammals.

Cutting is done at appropriate times so that the flowers are able to drop their seed, and volunteers help control scrub and bracken, encouraging more species to flourish.



Wildflower-rich verge reserve near Monsal Head

Ballidon – the brighter side of quarrying

Peregrine falcons, early purple orchids, badger-setts, butterflies and dewponds – is this a rustic idyll, secluded from the modern world?

No – it's the environment flourishing around Ballidon, near Ashbourne, a major quarry with significant industrial processing, producing 1.1 million tonnes of limestone per year.

Ballidon's products are part of our everyday lives: in tiles, adhesives, paints; in tablets, carpets, light-bulbs; in animal-feed, cars, roads and buildings.

Quarrying began here in 1943, before land-use planning controls and before the National Park came into existence in 1951 – nowadays such major development would not be permitted other than in exceptional circumstances.

But Ballidon's owners, Tarmac, have worked hard with the National Park Authority to reduce its impact, updating its planning permission to comply with modern working conditions, and to safeguard adjoining sites of high ecological

archaeological and landscape importance. Set among rolling hills between the High Peak and Tissington trails, the quarry's adjacent landholding includes a Site of Special Scientific Interest and Special Area of Conservation.

Here Tarmac looks after an experimental haymeadow restoration site, native woodlands, limestone heath, conservation farmland, pondlife, and a variety of species including peregrine falcon, ravens and buzzards.

Tarmac's parent-company, the Anglo-American Group, has declared a corporate commitment to conservation, and

Ballidon's Biodiversity Action Plan is now being used as a framework for 150 other sites in the UK.

It has a consultant ecologist, David Broom, and invites the British Trust for Conservation Volunteers and Derbyshire Badger Group to carry out environmental work, it gives tours to wildlife groups and hundreds of schoolchildren each year – all while the quarry is operating.

The National Park Authority requires the 64-hectare quarry to be progressively restored to nature, and management of this will go on beyond the end of its operating life in 2042.



Quarries were here long before the National Park, and the Authority's mineral planning section works hard with operators to minimise their impact on its special qualities. Ballidon makes a prime example of what can be done.



Early purple orchids

From wildlife to rocks – all in a day's work

Darren Middleton, quarry manager at Ballidon, has become a keen conservationist as well as a quarryman: "There are two aspects to my job," he said, "managing the quarry and managing the countryside, and both are important. Like most people who work here, I'm part of the local community, I was born in Wirksworth, and there's a pride in what we do locally.

"All our employees are given environmental awareness training and we're constantly trying to minimise our impact on the surrounding countryside."

Grahame Fyles, estates manager for the area, said: "We've demonstrated that quarrying operations can very easily be targeted towards biodiversity, we've developed good contacts with Defra, English Nature and the National Park, and we're starting to get some very good results.

"The Quarry Products Association has even filmed our work as an example of good practice."



Ballidon quarry manager Darren Middleton (left) and Tarmac estates manager Grahame Fyles on the experimental haymeadow restoration site, with quarry in the background



There's so much to enjoy in your Peak District

It's an adventure-playground...

- You can climb, glide, pothole, cycle, hike, ride, canoe or sail. Use the safe, traffic-free High Peak, Tissington, Longdendale, Manifold and Monsal trails for walking, cycling or riding.
Check out www.visitpeakdistrict.com/activities for ideas.
- Keep children happy with National Park Environmental Play Days (2½-6 yrs) at Fairholmes (Aug 1), Longdendale (Aug 3), Ilam (Aug 8), or Moorland Activity Days (age 8+) at Fairholmes (Aug 9) and Dovestones (Aug 30). Book on 01629 816290.
- Spot stalactites the easy way, in a show-cavern – plentiful opportunities in Castleton, Buxton or Matlock
- Take along the whole family, on wheelchair and buggy-accessible trails, including in the Goyt Valley, Macclesfield Forest, Dovestone Reservoir, the Tissington, High Peak and Longdendale trails, and the Manifold Valley.

A discovery centre...

- Expand your mind on a free guided walk, led by National Park rangers (01629 816290) or a day-course at Losehill Hall (01443 620373).
You can reach the heights with a moorland ramble, go bird-watching or flower-spotting, delve into archaeology and learn first aid or countryside navigation.
- Special walks in National Parks Week, July 21-28.
Download a pod-cast walk-guide (www.moorsforthefuture.org.uk click on Audio Trails).
- Explore the Peak District's heritage, including a wealth of stately homes and gardens – Haddon Hall, Chatsworth, Tissington Hall, Eyam Hall + Museum & Craft Centre, Lyme Park. The National Trust celebrates its centenary in the Peak District this year - visit www.nationaltrust.org.uk

An entertainment centre...

- Enjoy the Peak District's characterful customs, including well dressings (in a different village every week in summer), and country shows, such as Bakewell (Aug 2-3), Hope (Aug 28), Ashbourne (Aug 19). Try Buxton's international festival of music, drama and the arts (Jul 7-23).
- Find a feast at restaurants, pubs and shops which use fine local produce – listed in the Savour the Flavour booklet.
Buy from the producers themselves at farmers' markets in Bakewell, Buxton, Castleton, Matlock. Visit www.peakdistrictfoods.co.uk
- Listen to live music aboard regular Folk Trains, and visit a country pub before your return-journey. From Manchester/Sheffield to the Hope Valley or Manchester-Glossop. Visit www.folktrain.org.uk or call 0161 242 6239 or 0114 266 9532.



Days Out on your Doorstep

The Peak District is the perfect place to unwind – whether you live here or visit for a few days. What's more, there's plenty to do whether it rains or shines.

So, why not check out what's on offer?

- National Park Visitor Enquiry Line: 01629 816558
- www.visitpeakdistrict.com
- www.peakdistrict.gov.uk

Pick up a copy of the Peak District Visitor and What's on guides from local information centres (listed on the back page), and don't forget the free guided walks booklet in this issue of Parklife.



....And no need to drive

Explore by public transport - use a Peak Connections pocket guide for ready made days out by bus. Ideas include: Chatsworth, Derwent Dams, Tittesworth Reservoir, Castleton.

Visit www.derbyshire.gov.uk/buses or www.nationalrail.co.uk for public transport journey-planners, or contact the Traveline 0870 6082608.

