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**'If you build it, they will come'
The Origins of Scotland's Country Parks**

Volume 1

By:

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‘If you build it, they will come’: The origins of Scotland’s Country Parks

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Volume 1



Pollok Country Park, Glasgow (Author's collection)

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Abstract

Country parks emerged as a designated landscape type in the UK following legislation in the 1960s. Conceived initially as a solution to damaging impacts on the scenic and working countryside from visiting motorists, they were a response to alarmist forecasts of trends that would exacerbate these problems further. Although often mentioned in discussion of countryside policy, country parks have never been examined in depth in Scotland, where the applicability of this policy has generally been either ignored, or conflated with the experience of England & Wales. Yet recreational need in Scotland was very different, and requires specific examination, as does the solution provided.

This thesis uses archive material, together with contemporary commentary, to explore countryside recreation policy in Scotland in the later twentieth century. It considers whether the factors influencing legislation in England & Wales were germane to Scotland as well, and whether the emergent Scottish policy reflected Scotland's distinctive needs. The thesis explores the creation of the Countryside Commission for Scotland and the expectations placed upon it, together with its fundamental weaknesses. It examines the implementation of country park policy in Scotland, the difficulties caused by the weak evidence base, and the ways in which policy was developed, amended and even subverted to ensure that visible results were achieved. It explores several issues of scholarly debate on countryside recreation, providing a Scottish perspective on these.

The analysis demonstrates the need for clarity in policy-making and the intrinsic weakness of a 'blank sheet of paper' approach, the importance of aligning accountabilities with appropriate powers, the need to integrate policy across related

areas of operation, and the value of defining and monitoring 'success'. It thus provides not only an insight into historic recreation and open space policy but also more general understanding of Scotland's history in the pre-devolution period.

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Abbreviations

ACCS	Association of County Councils in Scotland
AMB	Ancient Monuments Branch, Scottish Development Dept.
APRS	Association for the Preservation of Rural Scotland
BBDC	Banff and Buchan District Council
BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
CCS	Countryside Commission for Scotland
CPRE	Council for the Preservation of Rural England
CRC	Central Regional Council
CRRAG	Countryside Recreation Research Advisory Group
FC	Forestry Commission
FRC	Fife Regional Council
GRC	Grampian Regional Council
HBC	Historic Buildings Commission
HIDB	Highlands and Islands Development Board
LUC	Land Use Consultants
MLNR	Ministry of Land and Natural Resources
NCB	National Coal Board
NFU	National Farmers' Union
NPC	National Parks Commission (England & Wales)
NTS	National Trust for Scotland
ORRRC	Outdoor Recreation Resources Review Commission
PP	Parliamentary Papers
RFACS	Royal Fine Arts Commission for Scotland
RSPB	Royal Society for the Protection of Birds

RTPI	Royal Town Planning Institute
SCAC	Scottish Countryside Activities Council
SDD	Scottish Development Department
SLF	Scottish Landowners' Federation
SNH	Scottish Natural Heritage
SPNR	Society for the Protection of Nature Reserves
STARPS	Scottish Tourism and Recreation Planning Studies
STB	Scottish Tourist Board

Chapter 1: Introduction

‘The open country [is] the greatest of all parks.’

*Patrick Abercrombie*¹

Country parks emerged in the United Kingdom through provisions in the Countryside Acts of 1967 (in Scotland) and 1968 (in England and Wales), which also provided a framework for delivery of the new parks, a grant regime providing capital finance, and a Countryside Commission in each jurisdiction responsible *inter alia* for overseeing implementation. The aim was to provide strategically-located spaces for outdoor recreation in a countryside setting, in response to the perceived needs of an increasingly mobile, car-owning public placing growing demands on the countryside as a space for recreation, to the detriment of scenery, ecology and the rural economy. The aspiration, which is explored critically in this thesis, was that the provision of sufficiently-attractive spaces dedicated to recreation, with infrastructure to support visitors arriving by car and providing the activities they sought to pursue, would reduce pressure on parts of the countryside less suited for high-intensity recreation. Their primary purpose was thus one of containment and visitor management rather than an extension of opportunity.

A total of over 250 country parks were enabled in the UK before the programme petered out in the 1990s.² Since then, the terminology has been less precisely applied, and one commentator claimed that there were in 2008 around 430 sites in England

¹ Patrick Abercrombie, ‘Country Planning’, in C. Williams Ellis (ed.), *Britain and the Beast* (London: Dent, 1938), pp. 133–40 (p. 138). Abercrombie (1879–1957) was a pioneer of town planning who was involved extensively in post-war redevelopment including in London, Clydeside and Plymouth, and in the New Towns movement in England and Scotland. He was a founder of CPRE and served as its first Secretary.

² Countryside Agency: *Towards a Country Parks Renaissance* (Cheltenham, 2002), p. 14.

alone describing themselves in this way.³ They are thus, at least quantitatively, a significant element of recreational provision, and some have qualitative claims as well, having achieved ‘Green Flag’ status, which recognises both quality of provision and standards of maintenance, or other accolades; Pollok Country Park in Glasgow received the ‘Best Park in Europe’ award in 2008 (**see title page**).⁴ In addition, they have broadened their role over time to embrace nature conservation, heritage protection, interpretation and education, and the provision of arts and sports opportunities, adding further to their significance.

Country parks were part of a developing portfolio of statutorily designated landscapes, principally chosen for their aesthetic qualities, ecological significance or historic importance at a national level; the modern process of statutory designation began in the late nineteenth century, but accelerated rapidly after the second world war. The overall purpose has been described as threefold - nature conservation, landscape conservation, and heritage conservation - but this analysis overlooks the use of designation for reasons other than protection.⁵ This fourth approach was pioneered in Scotland with the creation of the first Forest Park, an area of Forestry Commission (FC) plantation in Argyll opened specifically for recreation in 1936 and subsequently replicated elsewhere in the UK.⁶ Country parks also belong to this fourth category, in that their designation offers only vicarious protection to more vulnerable, landscapes.

³ D. Solly, ‘Country Parks: Celebrating 40 Years of Evolution of a Greenspace Family Member’, *Countryside Recreation*, 16.3 (2008), 20–23 (p. 20). A similar figure was cited in the BBC’s *Countryfile* programme, 12 August 2018.

⁴ ‘Pollok Country Park’, <https://www.visitscotland.com/info/see-do/pollok-country-park-p247171> [accessed 2 February 2017]

⁵ Macaulay Land Use Research Institute (now part of the James Hutton Institute), at [www.http://macaulay.webarchive.hutton.ac.uk/ccw/task-two/designations.html](http://macaulay.webarchive.hutton.ac.uk/ccw/task-two/designations.html), August 2014 [accessed 24 August 2018].

⁶ David Evans, *A History of Nature Conservation in Britain* (London: Routledge, 1992), p. 57.

The National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 was a major designatory milestone, establishing several new categories, including national parks and areas of outstanding natural beauty (AoNBs), both intended to strike a balance between production, recreation and amenity. Scotland took a somewhat different direction in 1949, however, and neither national parks, nor AoNBs, were recognised there. Scotland's country parks, whilst essentially identical in definition and purpose to their English counterparts, do not therefore fit into the same designation hierarchy that exists in England & Wales. The Scottish context was also distinctive in other ways, including less restricted access to open countryside, lower levels of car ownership, and demographic decline, so that the assertion made by a government spokesman in 1967 that the country park idea was 'designed for Scotland' merits closer historical examination.⁷

Country parks' status has prompted several reviews over the years, including one in 2003 which sought a 'renaissance' in their fortunes; the frequency (and tenor) of review suggests that the parks have struggled to define, or to sustain, their rôle over time.⁸ Scottish parks have not been exempt from this, having been reviewed in 1997 and again in 2003, and their ongoing viability has thereby been challenged.⁹ Kit Campbell's 1997 review for Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) was critical of the parks' financial sustainability, describing Scottish country park managers as holding 'a time-

⁷ PP: 1966-67: House of Commons, Standing Committees, Official Report Session 1966-67, Vol XII, p 8: J. Dickson Mabon, Secretary of State for Scotland: Speech to Scottish Grand Committee, 18th April 1967. Dick Mabon (1925-2008) was a Scottish Labour politician who represented Greenock as MP and served as Minister of State for Scotland in the Wilson administration, from 1967 to 1970. In 1981 he joined the Social Democratic Party, but re-joined Labour in 1991 (Obituary, *The Guardian*, 15 April 2008).

⁸ PP: House of Commons Twentieth Report, 1998-99; Countryside Agency: *Towards a Country Park Renaissance*. Reviews of country parks in England and Wales took place before this in 1996, 1997, and 1999.

⁹ Kit Campbell, 'The Wood, Not the Trees: Scottish Country Parks Value for Money Appraisal' (unpublished report for SNH, Edinburgh, 1997); Mairi Caughey, 'Review of Country Parks in Scotland' in 'Country Parks: Seminar Proceedings of the Countryside Recreation Network' (Unpublished report, Swindon, 2003), 8-12.

bomb...ticking'.¹⁰ The catastrophe has not yet taken place, but some Scottish country parks are showing distinct signs of neglect that bode ill for their future, accelerated by austerity policies that have driven down local government budgets for discretionary services. Several authorities in Scotland have established alternative management arrangements, such as semi-autonomous charitable trusts, to run the parks (and other services) at arms' length and lower direct cost, while one park has had some of its land reallocated to build a new school.¹¹ None as yet has entertained outright disposal, although this has been mooted in England and may not be far away.¹²

In all, 36 country parks were created in Scotland during the lifetime of the Countryside Commission for Scotland (CCS), which operated from 1967 until 1992, when it was absorbed into a repurposed body in the form of SNH. Although country park work has continued since, this thesis is limited in time to the period leading up to the legislation that created them, and its implementation under the aegis of CCS, thus covering the origins and development of the policy itself, and its subsequent evolution as the practical realities of implementation became apparent, within the lifetime of a single responsible body. Whilst it is impossible to examine the origins of country parks effectively in isolation from England & Wales, the focus of the thesis is on the Scottish experience of engaging with the policy, and on its integration (or otherwise) with other political responses in Scotland during this period. The thesis is thus contained both temporally and geographically, and does not attempt to evaluate country parks' ongoing relevance as open space provision – though such an evaluation might well be timely.

¹⁰ Campbell, 'The Wood, Not the Trees', pp. 14, 51.

¹¹ Judith Tonner, 'Schools set to be built in Drumpellier Country Park', *Daily Record*, 21 January 2009.

¹² Peter Lindsay, 'Fears prime Sussex beauty spot Seven Sisters could be sold off', *The Argus*, 28 March 2017.

Historiography

Any analysis of the historiography of Scottish country parks must immediately confront two major constraints. In the first place, relatively little has been written on country parks at all; when they are addressed, it is usually as part of a wider analysis focussing on more prominent aspects of countryside policy such as national parks and nature reserves. And secondly, where country parks are examined at all, the focus is almost entirely Anglo-centric, with Scotland either overlooked altogether or conflated with its neighbour as if their experience has been identical. The exploration of the historiography has revealed six areas of scholarly debate where commentators' perspectives on country parks either differ, or have evolved with the passage of time; analysis of these issues has not only to consider the arguments themselves, but also whether the conclusions reached are equally applicable to the Scottish context. The thesis thus enables, for the first time, a Scottish perspective to contribute to these discussions.

Phases of policy

The idea that recreation planning from the 1960s to the 1990s might resolve into distinct phases was first suggested by the leisure specialist Tony Veal in 1993, who suggested shifts in emphasis over the life of the policy, which might be pertinent to examining implementation and impact. Veal's analysis identified a 'demand' phase up to 1972 when policy was driven forward by the perceived, and mostly unchallenged, demand for recreational space, a 'need' phase from 1972 to 1985 in which attempts were made to meet social objectives such as inclusion and equity of access, and finally an 'enterprise' phase, where local government's role began to diminish and the private

sector engaged more in countryside management functions.¹³ Veal traces this last phase's origin to an interview given by Margaret Thatcher in 1983, when she noted 'there is much industry to be had from people's pleasures', and the subsequent deregulation and privatisation of leisure that took place under her government.¹⁴ Whilst Veal's analysis is based on England & Wales, it is possible to see examples of his phases in the Scottish portfolio, though it is much less easy to align these with his chronology.

A similar analytical approach was taken by David Lambert in the historical analysis he prepared for the 2003 'renaissance' project.¹⁵ Lambert defined his phases a little differently, and used a vaguer chronological framework that suggests incremental change rather than sudden shifts in emphasis. He described the initial phase as the 'honeypot' period, when the focus was on using country parks as distraction sites to reduce pressure on more scenic and vulnerable locations by providing convenient, alternative countryside opportunities. But by the mid-seventies, the emphasis had moved towards more socially inclusive approaches, with initiatives to widen the audience for country parks and a greater tendency to locate them on the urban fringe as a means of achieving this.¹⁶ Lambert defined this as the 'reorientation' phase, and, allowing for less precise chronology, his analysis thus far reflects that of Veal. Lambert's third phase, however, was quite different: a 'gateway' phase in which an emphasis was placed on using country parks as a user-friendly introduction to wider

¹³ Anthony J. Veal, 'Planning for Leisure: Past, Present and Future', in S. Glyptis (ed.), *Leisure and the Environment: Essays in Honour of J. A. Patmore* (London: Belhaven Press, 1993), pp. 85–95 (pp. 85–87).

¹⁴ Interview in *The Director*, September 1983, cited by Veal, 'Planning for Leisure', p. 88. The interview related to a private sector leisure development near Corby.

¹⁵ David Lambert, 'The History of the Country Park, 1966–2005: Towards a Renaissance?', *Landscape Research*, 2006, 43–62 (pp. 49–53).

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 50.

countryside for those unused to it. Lambert's analysis is more convincing than Veal's, but there is doubt as to whether these phases are as mutually exclusive as he suggests; as late as 2003, the Countryside Agency was suggesting that English country parks had a honeypot role to play alongside their function as gateways.¹⁷ And again, while all three phases can be exemplified from parks in the Scottish portfolio, it remains less clear that these fit into a definitive chronological framework. But the fact that two commentators have highlighted identifiable shifts in policy emphasis is interesting, and suggests a metamorphosis of the policy during implementation.

Impact and success

Several academics, from a variety of disciplines, have expressed a view on the success, or otherwise, of the country park initiative. Some of these were little more than optimism associated with the start of a new initiative, such as the view put forward in 1970 by the eminent geographer Allan Patmore, who welcomed 'the promise [country parks] afford of...a carefully conceived pattern of recreational opportunity rather than a sporadic and haphazard response to demand'.¹⁸ An early assessment from 1973, based on just five years of delivery, from the planner Andrew Gilg, concluded that 'country parks...have attracted much recreational pressure away from the most sensitive areas.'¹⁹ This positive view has been perpetuated by other commentators, including the official historian of recreation, Gordon Cherry, who twenty years later was sure that countryside recreation 'numbers have been absorbed

¹⁷ Michael Hall and Stephen Page, *The Geography of Tourism and Recreation: Environment, Space and Place* (Abingdon: Routledge, 1999), p. 107. The Countryside Agency was a successor body to the Countryside Commission in England.

¹⁸ J. Allan Patmore, *Land and Leisure* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1972), p. 241.

¹⁹ Andrew W. Gilg, *Countryside Planning : The First Three Decades, 1945-76* (London: Methuen, 1979), pp. 166-167.

remarkably successfully'.²⁰ And SNH's 2003 review concluded – notwithstanding Campbell's reservations in his 1997 report to SNH - that that the parks had 'broadly achieved their objectives, provide[d] value for money, and continue[d] to attract significant numbers of visitors'.²¹

The most recent contribution in this vein has come from environmental geographer Ian Rotherham, whose 2015 analysis places country parks prominently within core countryside management functions, treating them as significant elements of provision, and distancing himself from those for whom they are more tangential.²² He is unequivocal about their impact, describing them as 'hugely successful' as recreation provision and 'massively influential' in creating awareness of environmental and conservation issues.²³ He also suggests that the honeypot approach was largely effective, justifying this position by the apparent popularity of country parks with visitors: 'the country park has delivered a product that leisure visitors to the countryside have swarmed to in droves. They clearly like it.'²⁴ Thus throughout the existence of country parks, and right up to the present day, they have had advocates who regard them as a successful intervention.

There have, nevertheless, also been more equivocal views. One early critic was the environmental activist Marion Shoard, who in 1976 was dismissive of what she described as 'second-rate countryside' constituting '[people's] nearby

²⁰ Gordon E. Cherry, 'Changing Social Attitudes Towards Leisure and the Countryside in Britain, 1890-1990', in S. Glyptis (ed.), *Leisure and the Environment: Essays in Honour of J. A. Patmore* (London: Belhaven Press, 1993), pp. 22–32 (p.29).

²¹ Campbell, 'The Wood not the Trees' p. 8; Caughey, 'Review of Country Parks in Scotland', p. 8.

²² Ian D. Rotherham, *The Rise and Fall of Countryside Management: A Historical Account* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2015), p. 27.

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 42.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 48, 53.

unprepossessing country park'.²⁵ Her view had moderated a little by 1999, when she conceded that country parks included good natural sites, but she still insisted that there were also several very poor sites.²⁶ Another more circumspect view was expressed by Patmore in 1983, when he qualified his initial enthusiasm by describing country parks as 'the most innovative yet frustrating outcome of the legislation'. His frustration arose from the absence of strategic spatial planning in locating country parks, and from the failure to match resource against evidenced demand.²⁷ By this time, Patmore's view was that delivery had turned out to be less responsive than was originally promised, and he also argued that demand was best met using nodal and linear solutions, reflecting actual patterns of use, rather than through provision of large spaces.²⁸

For others, though, the evidence is less qualified. These include the geographer Carolyn Harrison, who suggested in 1971 that the impact of country parks had been limited, attributing this to the lack of facilities at sites, and to by-laws that had asserted the primacy of aesthetic ideas over more disruptive activities.²⁹ She contended that country park policy had emerged as 'a pale shadow' of the ideas originally set out by those advocating them, and suggested that slow take-up raised questions about their prominence in funding regimes.³⁰ For Harrison, country parks had no cohesive identity,

²⁵ Marion Shoard, 'Recreation: The Key to Survival of England's Countryside', in M. MacEwen (ed.), *Future Landscapes* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1976), pp. 58-73 (p. 63).

²⁶ Marion Shoard, *A Right to Roam* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999) p. 202.

²⁷ J. Allan Patmore, *Recreation and Resources* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1983) pp. 197, 199.

²⁸ J. Allan Patmore, 'Routeways and Recreation', in P. Lavery (ed.), *Recreational Geography* (David and Charles, 1974), pp. 70-96 (p. 72).

²⁹ Carolyn Harrison, *Countryside Recreation in a Changing Society* (London: TMS Partnership, 1991) p. 105.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 47, 61, 95.

had not succeeded in attracting audiences, and had failed to meet visitor expectations.³¹

The environmental historian David Evans, writing in 1992, joined Shoard in characterising country parks as ‘tame, organised countryside’, while conceding that they could offer something to those contented with a sanitised environment.³² But the countryside specialist Nigel Curry was less accommodating, describing country parks’ impact as ‘minimal’.³³ His 1994 work attributed this to the way the policy was developed, as a defence against recreational encroachment on other countryside priorities rather than a positive response to an emerging need for active recreation space: ‘policy could be interpreted as attempting to solve a problem of recreational access, rather than exploit an access potential.’³⁴ This is a useful analysis that highlights a weakness of the policy that can be traced back to its protectionist origins. The geographers Michael Hall and Stephen Page tended in 1999 to concur with Curry; they believed that country parks, while important, ‘have only a minor role to play’ in recreation provision, a position which suggests that their value lies in other, secondary, purposes.³⁵ A more recent view from the countryside commentator Martin Collins, writing in 2003, pointed out that the Countryside Commission itself had said that country parks were ‘tired’, in need of rejuvenation, and had been largely overlooked by the performance management regime being deployed elsewhere in local government.³⁶

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 103.

³² Evans, *History of Nature Conservation*, p.111.

³³ Nigel Curry, *Countryside Recreation, Access and Land Use Planning* (London: Chapman & Hall, 1994), p. 52.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. xi, 115.

³⁵ Hall and Page, *Geography of Tourism and Recreation*, p. 106.

³⁶ Martin Collins, ‘Looking for a Renaissance in Country Parks’, *Town and Country Planning*, 72.8 (2003), 251–253 (pp. 251, 253).

There is thus a considerable and continuing difference of opinion between scholars on this question. But a second dimension that emerges from this debate is that of the evidence itself; what criteria might be appropriate to a historical assessment of country parks? This is evidently contentious ground: Rotherham and Harrison have both used visitor numbers, Shoard and Evans have cited site quality, Patmore would look for responsiveness to patterns of usage, and Collins, in keeping with the spirit of the Major and Blair years, would want performance indicators. All have sought to fill a gap left by an original policy that contained no measure by which success could be judged (or failure identified and corrected), a fundamental weakness at the time and evidently a continuing source of contention that has led scholars to conflicting conclusions.

Commodification and marketisation

There are two dimensions to the issue of commodification: the extent to which the country parks offer a defined and predictable package of recreation, and the extent to which this package is regarded as an essential service rather than an opportunity for monetisation. Although the question is especially redolent of the Thatcher years, it was discussed, albeit inconclusively, as early as 1976, when the Countryside Recreation Research Advisory Group (CRRAG) focussed its annual conference on the economics of recreation, discussed the practicalities of pricing, and debated whether recreation might be regarded as a commodity to be marketised rather than a free-from-charge public service.³⁷ The conference's focus followed a House of Lords debate in which recreation was described as a social service almost on a par with

³⁷ Robbie Stoakes, 'Economic Aspects of Countryside Recreation Management Pricing: A Background Paper' in *Economic Aspects of Countryside Recreation Management*, Report on CRRAG conference at Durham 1976 (London: Janssen Services, 1976), pp 3-23 (p. 3).

other essentials such as education, health and housing.³⁸ And CRRAG revisited this theme in 1980, with papers on the role of the private sector in countryside recreation, and on a public/private partnership at an English park.³⁹

As to standardisation, the leisure specialist Sue Glyptis argued in 1991 that ‘country parks are far from being standard packages’ and drew attention to the wide variation in what the parks offered their visitors.⁴⁰ These observations, which are entirely supportable in a Scottish context, seem to contradict the idea of widespread commodification through the notion of branding, but nevertheless allow for the possibility that each country park has commodified itself, at least passively, by defining its desired audience; the brand may not signify a consistent product, but there is nevertheless a product of some sort on offer at each location. The historical geographer Paul Cloke, however, who saw the 1980s as a period when the countryside was interpreted as ‘an ‘increasingly marketable commodity’, believed that an understanding had been created, specifically through branding, that appealed to some potential users, and by implication tended to discourage others.⁴¹ This in turn suggests that any ‘success’ attributed to country parks might need to be qualified in terms of the socio-demographic, economic or other defining characteristics of the

³⁸ PP: House of Lords Sessional Papers IX 1972-73: Select Committee on Sport and Leisure, First Report, p. 1810.

³⁹ Murray Stewart, ‘The Contribution of the Private Sector: Objectives, Organisation and Priorities in Countryside Recreation’ in *Making the Most of Limited Resources*, Report on CRRAG conference at Lancaster, 1980 (Cheltenham: Countryside Commission, 1980), pp. 5-20; Peter Kellard, ‘The Partnership Between Public Ownership and Private Investment: An Example from Shipley Country Park in *Making the Most of Limited Resources*, Report on CRRAG conference at Lancaster, 1980 (Cheltenham: Countryside Commission, 1980), pp. 70-83.

⁴⁰ Sue Glyptis, *Countryside Recreation* (Harlow: Longmans, 1991), pp. 88, 89.

⁴¹ Paul Cloke: ‘The Countryside: Development, Conservation and an Increasingly Marketable Commodity’ in P. Cloke (ed.): *Policy and Change in Thatcher’s Britain* (Oxford: Pergamon, 1992), pp 269-295 (p. 269); Paul Cloke, ‘The Countryside as Commodity: New Rural Spaces for Leisure’, in S. Glyptis (ed.), *Leisure and the Environment: Essays in Honour of J. A. Patmore* (London: Belhaven Press, 1993), pp. 53–70 (p. 55).

audience that they attract, a limitation that is alluded to by several other writers, both contemporaneously and retrospectively.

Most recently, Ian Rotherham has noted the potential for countryside recreation to contribute to economic development and tax revenue.⁴² He draws attention to two English sites which provide employment and retail opportunities, involve local communities, and help to promote inward investment in their localities; he sees this as a 'vital' contribution to the local economies.⁴³ This argument is especially relevant to Scotland, where the potential for recreation to contribute significantly to economic development has long been recognised, but has generated significant controversy fuelled by the tension between recreational pressures, economic necessity, and conservation of valued and fragile environments. The best-known example is the debate over skiing and access at Cairn Gorm (an issue since the 1950s, and discussed further in chapter 2), but comparable disputes have arisen at Drumkinnon Bay and more recently in Lochaber, where tourism's importance to the local economy has led to controversial increased provision for potentially erosive activities such as mountain biking and water sports.⁴⁴ Country parks were originally conceived to protect areas of scenic quality from activities of this type but have clearly proved insufficient in some instances. Scotland also has examples of both free-of-charge recreation provision and paid-for facilities, both within and beyond country park boundaries, and persistent revenue pressures have made marketisation of the country park a recurring issue

⁴² Ian D. Rotherham, 'The Impacts on Active Countryside Tourism of the Rise and Fall of Countryside Management', in *Active Countryside Tourism* (Leeds: International Centre for Research in Events, Tourism and Hospitality, 2013), p. 5.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, pp. 9-10.

⁴⁴ A. Prentice, 'Changing Economic Benefits of the Highlands and Islands Countryside Recreation Market', *Countryside Recreation* 12.1 (2004), 9-11; C. Reid, 'The Development of a Mountain Bike Centre, Nevis Range, Fort William', *Countryside Recreation*, 12.3/4 (2004), 10-13.

through to the present day, prompting consideration of charges for access and parking as well as provision of retail, catering, and other revenue-generating opportunities.

Social inclusion

Despite the differences of scholarly view on some aspects of country parks, there is general acceptance that countryside recreation has, over time, primarily appealed to a middle-class, relatively affluent audience. This was first highlighted by K. K. Sillitoe in his pioneering study of leisure in 1969, and further emphasised by the planner Martin Elson's study of visitor surveys at a number of country parks in 1977, which established a strong correlation between participation and car ownership.⁴⁵ This is hardly surprising; the policy had been predicated around the needs of car owners, and those in a position to own cars tended naturally to be the more affluent members of society. Michael Christie's 1999 study suggested this was still the case, at least in Scotland, at the end of the millennium, while Mark Shucksmith, Nigel Curry, and a proliferation of countryside social inclusion initiatives, all indicate an issue continuing to raise its head over time.⁴⁶

But while the outcome of the policy may not be contentious, its causes have been a matter of debate. Veal suggested in 1973 that the problem derived from planners' focus on types of provision (play space, sports pitches etc.) rather than on demography or need, while Terry Coppock and Brian Duffield, who have researched

⁴⁵ K. K. Sillitoe, *Planning for Leisure* (London: HMSO, 1969), p. 90; Martin Elson, *A Review and Evaluation of Countryside Recreation Site Surveys* (Cheltenham: Countryside Commission, 1977), p. 46.

⁴⁶ Michael Christie, 'An Assessment of the Economic Effectiveness of Recreation Policy Using Contingent Valuation' in *J. of Environmental Planning and Management*, 42.4 (1999), 547-564 (p. 559); Mark Shucksmith, *Exclusive Countryside? Social Inclusion and Regeneration in Rural Areas* (York, Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 2000), p. 2; Nigel Curry *et al*, 'To Climb a Mountain? Social Inclusion and Outdoor Recreation in Britain' in *World Leisure Journal*, 43. 3, 2001, pp 3-15.

Scottish recreation extensively, would agree, drawing attention in 1975 to the way in which supply affects take-up: 'all pursuits, active or passive, have distinctive customer profiles defined by the social, economic and demographic characteristics of their participants'.⁴⁷ Many recreational pursuits at least tend to be identifiably exclusive to particular age, gender or economic groups, and providers have therefore always been able to define and delimit their parks' user profiles by including or excluding particular activities.

Coppock and Duffield rightly point out that at these early stages potential park users would have had some difficulty in stating exactly what they wanted from country parks, a finding still echoed in consultation today.⁴⁸ Nevertheless, Curry argued in 1994 that the uneven take-up across socio-economic groups was attributable to a failure to understand popular need, and an emphasis on providing 'what people ought to have' rather than what they might need, or ask for.⁴⁹ He suggested that planners were reluctant to engage with potential users: 'the formulation of recreation policies appears to pay scant regard to people's demands and needs...[this] represents a tradition of planning to standards....rather than consumer preferences.'⁵⁰ But Curry is interpreting the 1960s by the standards of the 1990s; consultation with users was never normal practice in the early days of country parks, and a top-down approach, however misguided, was quite usual. As the conservative planner Lincoln Allison put it in 1975, 'We all know what people want from their environment',⁵¹ a statement which

⁴⁷ J. T. Coppock and B.S. Duffield, *Recreation in the Countryside: A Spatial Analysis* (London: Macmillan, 1975), pp. 36-37.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 36-38, citing B. S. Duffield *et al*, *Leisure + Countryside =, A Geographical Appraisal of Countryside Recreation in Lanarkshire* (Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press, 1970). The author has conducted several unpublished park studies that further illustrate this point.

⁴⁹ Curry, *Countryside Recreation*, pp. xiii, 28.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 173.

⁵¹ L. Allison, *Environmental Planning* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1975), p. 69.

assumes not only privileged knowledge but also a homogeneity of need that the earliest studies had already demonstrated to be false.⁵²

Economic inequalities offer a further dimension of social inclusion in recreation; if provision favours the more affluent, should all sections of society pay for provision through the public purse, or should those who benefit pay for their access? This issue was first raised during the Thatcher years, when the planner Christopher Tarrant argued that the top-down approach, and its regressive result in favouring the affluent, justified a new approach based on charging for access, as well as a greater diversity of sites to broaden appeal – a mixed-market approach that also implies a form of socio-economic segregation between sites.⁵³ Christie's more recent (and Scottish-focussed) work makes a case for shifting the emphasis away from improving facilities for those who already benefit and towards those who do not currently take up the recreational offer, using consultation with non-users, an approach which ignores the fact that non-users are notoriously difficult to consult effectively, and (as Curry pointed out in 1994) may have other recreational preferences altogether.⁵⁴ This position however leaves open the idea that a recreational interest in the countryside is not equally probable across all socio-demographic groups, a view which has led in more recent years to moves to increase countryside take-up on the part of societal minorities.⁵⁵

⁵² For example, Sillitoe, *Planning for Leisure*, p. 74; Ken Roberts, 'The Changing Relationship between Work and Leisure' in I. Appleton (ed.), *Leisure Research and Policy* (Edinburgh: Scottish Academic Press, 1974), pp. 26-41 (p. 27).

⁵³ C. Tarrant: 'Country Park Provision and Achievement: A Case Study of Country Park Policy and Provision and the Behavioural Response of the Public' (Unpublished PhD thesis, Univ. of Manchester, 1988), pp. 391, 393.

⁵⁴ Christie, 'Economic Effectiveness', pp. 559-561; Curry, *Countryside Recreation*, pp. 93-94.

⁵⁵ For example, Catharine Ward Thompson *et al*, *The Countryside Agency Diversity Review: Options for Implementation - Final Report*, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh College of Art/Heriot Watt University, 2003); Melanie Bull (ed.), *Young People in the Countryside* (Countryside Recreation Network conference report, Sheffield, 2006).

In summary, the argument over inclusion lies not with the fact of broader or more limited appeal – commentators agree that country parks in this period tended to favour the more affluent - but rather in whether sufficient emphasis was given to equity of access to the countryside, and whether corrective action held any prospect of meaningful change. Scotland has a contribution to make in both these areas: there is evidence from Scotland of an appeal beyond the predictable constituency of park users, and of specific actions and opportunities designed to engage with a wider audience.

Strategic location

Location was also a recognised factor in social inclusion, and although early sites were generally some distance from the populations they were intended to serve, in both England and Scotland there were periods when peri-urban locations were preferred, on the grounds that these would be more accessible to those with no cars, or living in urban-fringe housing estates. In England, different authorities took differing approaches, however. Planners David Groome and Chris Tarrant identify Durham County Council committing to urban fringe sites, East Sussex prioritising proximity to public transport, and Merseyside favouring sites connected to footpaths, while Lincolnshire abandoned any pretence of strategy and accepted that site locations would be opportunistic.⁵⁶ This inconsistency vindicates Patmore's frustration over the absence of strategic thinking about provision.⁵⁷ And as Chapter 5 shows, the Scottish position on this was persistently one of inconsistency and vacillation.

⁵⁶ D. Groome and C. Tarrant, 'Countryside Recreation: Achieving Access for All?', *Countryside Planning Yearbook*, 6 (1985), 72-100 (p. 76).

⁵⁷ Patmore, 'Routeways and Recreation', p. 72.

Differences of view were not, however, confined to providers. A Countryside Commission survey in 1977 reported that people preferred natural countryside away from the town, rather than highly-managed urban fringe sites.⁵⁸ However, Elson just two years later strongly favoured a strategic, green belt approach: 'It is now accepted wisdom that...urban fringe areas...should receive priority attention in the allocation of public funds for recreation.'⁵⁹ His argument was based on accessibility, reuse of derelict land, and the protection of higher-quality land for other purposes, echoing the honeypot concept while noting the rehabilitative potential of recreation provision and promoting a more inclusive agenda.⁶⁰

Marion Shoard's view, in contrast, was that this fringe countryside was too compromised to provide the quality of recreation sites that people were entitled to expect; she described in 1999 their 'jungles of allotments and scrapyards, business parks and road interchanges, electricity sub-stations and derelict factories, gravel pits and miscellaneous wastelands...their most obvious components are things we...think of as blots on the landscape.'⁶¹ For her, recreation did not sit comfortably alongside the typical land uses of these 'edgelands', and would have been inconsistent with her emphasis on quality.⁶² Citing work by David Lowenthal and Hugh Prince, she argued

⁵⁸ Martin Fitton, 'Countryside Recreation: The Problems of Opportunity', *Local Government Studies*, 5.4 (1979), 57-90 (p. 86). The survey being cited is the 1977 National Survey of Countryside Recreation.

⁵⁹ Martin Elson, *Perspectives on Green Belt Local Plans* (Oxford, Oxford Polytechnic Dept. of Town Planning, 1979), p. 34.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 39-41.

⁶¹ Marion Shoard, 'Recreation in the Rural/Urban Interface', in M. F. Hopkinson (ed.), *Town and Country: Contemporary Issues at the Rural/Urban Interface* (York: College of Ripon and York St. John, 1999), pp. 1-11 (p. 1); Shoard, 'Recreation: The Key to Survival', p. 63.

⁶² Marion Shoard, 'Edgelands', in J. Jenkins (ed.), *Remaking the Landscape: The Changing Face of Britain* (London: Profile Books, 2002), pp. 117-132 (p. 117).

that people wanted a countryside that was diverse, but also managed; humanised, but free from litter and chaos.⁶³

As to the strategy behind provision, Sue Glyptis, writing in 1991, accepted Patmore's position that country park provision had been essentially opportunistic; she suggested that any original aspirations for a systematic pattern of provision were lost to an approach that focussed heavily on upgrading existing sites rather than creating new ones in areas of deficiency.⁶⁴ Hall and Page noted in 1999 that the consequence of this passive, reactive approach was an inequality in distribution of provision which further eroded notions of social inclusion.⁶⁵

The argument here centres on whether countryside recreation sites would achieve more by being located close to potential users, or in more natural countryside settings. This resurrects the questions of measuring what the parks were expected to achieve, and determining whether the parks were for motorists or locals. This tension existed in Scotland, where CCS' position on location shifted across time, and even varied according to which CCS representative might be speaking.

Values and countryside interpretation

Raymond Williams postulated in 1977 that a ruling class produces a social and political order reinforced through its created structures, a view that could be extended to consider country parks as a product of a particular set of social and political values.⁶⁶

⁶³ David Lowenthal and Hugh Prince, *The English Landscape* (1964), cited by Shoard, *Edgelands*, p. 120.

⁶⁴ Glyptis, *Countryside Recreation*, p. 89.

⁶⁵ Hall and Page, *Geography of Tourism and Recreation*, p. 106.

⁶⁶ Peter Jackson, *Maps of Meaning : An Introduction to Cultural Geography* (London: Routledge, 1992), p. 47. He is citing Williams, *Marxism and Literature* (1977). Raymond Williams (1921-1988) was a Marxist theorist and academic, and member of Plaid Cymru, who wrote extensively on issues of culture and sociology. His

He also asserted in 1981 that ideologies of the countryside express themselves through selective characterisation, advancing some interests at the expense of others and creating an interpretation of the countryside that disempowers other perspectives as ignorant or uninformed.⁶⁷ Applying these statements to country parks raises these questions: what values do they represent, and whose values were those; what interpretation of the countryside did the parks embody; and was one set of interests promoted while disempowering others?

On the question of prevailing values, Harrison's 1991 work suggested a dominant political role for land proprietorship, owners' assertion of their rights, and restrictive attitudes to public access.⁶⁸ She saw state intervention as constrained by political attitudes towards proprietorship: 'the extent to which the state has intervened in countryside recreation...has depended not only on its reluctance to compromise the proprietorial rights of private landed interests, but also on its reluctance to see countryside recreation as little more than a...luxury.' Alongside this, she identified the primacy of an aesthetic perspective of the countryside, which had been commandeered in support of proprietorial priorities such as agriculture, forestry and field sports and in opposition to personal freedom.⁶⁹ Terry Marsden *et al*, writing in 1993, agreed that rural analysis has tended to favour production, and particularly agriculture, at the expense of uses such as recreation, conservation and tourism, and that this focus is largely driven by vested interests based in traditional uses of the countryside.⁷⁰ Issues of power and control are fundamental to these arguments, and

work is celebrated by a learned society, two university research centres, and a foundation promoting adult education.

⁶⁷ Jackson, *Maps of Meaning*, p. 50, citing Raymond Williams, *Culture* (1981).

⁶⁸ Harrison, *Countryside Recreation*, p. xvi.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 155.

⁷⁰ Terry Marsden *et al*, *Constructing the Countryside* (London: UCL Press, 1993), pp 3, 9.

Wendy Darby contended in 2000 that ‘the representation of landscape is...deeply embedded in relations of power and knowledge’.⁷¹ And the social geographer Cara Aitchison *et al* saw, in 2002, a ‘hegemony’ of one culture, largely based on agricultural values and resistant to external interference, that has impeded progress towards any idea of countryside for all.⁷² These commentators all identify a dominant group, with values linked to aesthetics, production, and elite sport; and (at least by implication) an excluded group unable to assert an alternative approach.

More recently, however, David Matless has highlighted not only the tensions over land use that emerge from different interpretations of the countryside, and from resistance to a dominant position or an expected or enforced set of behavioural rules, but also the active process of containment emerging in consequence.⁷³ Matless argued that landscape interpretation is refracted through prisms both of class and expectation, so that different interpretations co-exist, albeit not with equal potency. This has led to characterisation of the countryside as a place for more educated enjoyment, while disruptive behaviour has been redirected towards seaside resorts and holiday camps – essentially an approach of containment and redirection, with clear parallels in the country park narrative.⁷⁴

The significance of the proprietorial interest is echoed strongly in the Scottish context. The eminent Scottish journalist Chris Baur drew attention in 1978 to the network the landowners had created, not only through their own representative bodies such as the

⁷¹ W. J. Darby, *Landscape and Identity: Geographies of Nation and Class in England* (Oxford: Berg, 2000), p. 9.

⁷² Cara Aitchison, Nicola MacLeod, and Stephen Shaw, *Leisure and Tourism Landscapes: Social and Cultural Geographies* (London: Routledge, 2002) pp. 50, 70.

⁷³ David Matless, *Landscape and Englishness* (London, Reaktion, 1998), p. 10.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 14-16, 248-252.

Scottish Landowners' Federation (SLF) and the National Farmers' Union (NFU), but also more widely through the boards of major Scottish enterprises such as banks, insurance companies and voluntary bodies: '[they] all know each other... a tight circle of politicians...civil servants and...landed gentry...they fix the agenda'.⁷⁵ Subsequent commentators have reinforced this view, with planning specialists Mark Shucksmith and Greg Lloyd noting in 1983 that 'the pervasive influence of the private estate is...[a]...major feature distinguishing rural Scotland.'⁷⁶ This issue was long-standing: John Burnett draws attention to a Labour planning document from 1941 which asserted that 'selfish interests' held excessive sway over land use.⁷⁷ Roger Sidaway foresaw this continuing: 'if there are signs of radical change, the powerful landowning interests in Scotland will organise an effective defence, as they have done on so many occasions in the past.'⁷⁸

The landowners' own position has been characterised as stewardship, the custodianship of a cultural heritage – 'keepers of the nation's soul' – and they suggest that they have generally discharged this responsibility sensitively.⁷⁹ They argue that, despite the extensive use of their land for forestry, they are unable to make a decent living merely from production: '[the] return on owning rural land is not...economic'; and that this justifies field sports as a parallel land use alongside production, with positive

⁷⁵ Chris Baur: *The Scotsman*, 18 September 1978. Baur was Deputy Editor and later Editor (1985-88) of the *Scotsman*, and Scottish Political Correspondent for the BBC. He has subsequently taken other senior journalistic roles. (*Who's Who 2015*, London, A & C Black).

⁷⁶ D. Mark Shucksmith and M. Gregory Lloyd, 'Rural Planning in Scotland: A Critique', *Countryside Planning Yearbook*, 4 (1983), 103-128 (p. 106).

⁷⁷ John A. Burnett, *The Making of the Modern Scottish Highlands* (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2011), p. 105; the document referred to is Labour Party, *A Plan for Post-war Scotland*, 1941.

⁷⁸ Roger Sidaway, 'Trends in Outdoor Recreation to the Year 2000', in G. Dickinson (ed.), *Public Policy and Outdoor Recreation in Scotland* (Glasgow: University of Glasgow, 1985), pp. 7-12 (p. 10).

⁷⁹ David McCrone, 'Land, Democracy and Culture in Scotland', *Scottish Affairs* 23 (1998) 73-92 (p. 79).

impact on the local economy.⁸⁰ This view, which downplays the significance (and the enjoyment) of field sports as elitist recreation, legitimises the exclusion of unwanted visitors on the basis that they may be disturbing stock or endangering themselves. The land activist Andy Wightman has persistently challenged this argument, contending that field sports generate little economic benefit beyond the estate itself, and perpetuate elitism, while pointing out that 'no serious...challenge to [the proprietors'] dominance has emerged...and public policy towards them has been notable by its ambivalence'.⁸¹

Competing interests for land use are readily identifiable in Scotland. Historian Chris Smout has identified different perspectives within recreation, one exclusive in nature (field sports) and the other more populist (active outdoor sports). These have to co-exist not only with one another, but also with the appreciation of scenic beauty, and conservation of *flora* and *fauna*, as well as with productive land uses, access for leisure, and economically important activities such as tourism.⁸² This makes the countryside heavily contested space. Tourism was a bone of contention already by 1949, when the National Trust for Scotland (NTS) insisted during the national park debate that Highlanders neither needed tourism, nor could provide facilities to support it.⁸³ This point was also made by Bob Grieve, of the Highlands and Islands Development Board (HIDB) in 1962 when he asked whether Scotland really wanted tourism, and identified an underlying desire on the part of some in authority to be allowed to enjoy the scenery

⁸⁰ Fergusson of Kilkerran, Charles: 'Public Recreation in the Countryside: A Landowner's View' in 'Regional Parks, Report on a Symposium' (Unpublished conference report, Renfrew County Council, 1971), pp. 2, 3.

⁸¹ A. Wightman and P. Higgins, 'Sporting Estates and the Recreational Economy in the Highlands and Islands of Scotland, *Scottish Affairs* 31. 1, 2000, pp 18-36 (p. 19).

⁸² T.C. Smout, *The Highlands and the Roots of Green Consciousness, 1750-1990* (Inverness: Scottish Natural Heritage, 1990), pp. 24, 27.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, p. 27.

while denying that pleasure to others.⁸⁴ Smout also draws attention to a long, and largely hidden, history of protest over access.⁸⁵

Matless too has parallels in Scotland. He uses the example of Potter Heigham, a somewhat tacky and tourist-oriented village in the scenic Norfolk Broads, to illustrate differing expectations of the countryside's appearance and desired audience.⁸⁶ In a Scottish context, he might equally well have cited the example of Aviemore, a highland village that constituted a similar visual and cultural embarrassment at this time, or perhaps the intrusive retail/tourism development at Loch Lomond Shores. Such developments illustrate what historians Lynn Abrams and Callum Brown identify among the contradictions of modern Scotland, which contains not only idyllic and romanticised scenery but also insensitive development, urban and peri-urban dereliction.⁸⁷ These 'other' landscapes also have meaning and significance for many, despite being heavily compromised, and are also part of the quotidian experience of the inhabitants of Scotland's towns and cities; perhaps the likes of Shoard should make their judgments about country park quality in the light of these everyday experiences as well as with the high-amenity landscapes of tourism?

⁸⁴ Robert Grieve, 'Planning for Tourism – The Fuller Use of Statutory Powers' (Unpublished Report, Edinburgh, 1962), p. 2. Sir Robert (Bob) Grieve (1910-1995) was a Scottish planner and academic who was involved in many important policy initiatives, including the regional plan for the Clyde Valley and post-war housing policy. He became chair of the Highlands and Islands Development Board in 1965 (taking secondment from his professorship at Glasgow University), and took a leading role in many other Scottish bodies. (Obituary, *The Independent*, 30 October 1995)

⁸⁵ T.C. Smout, *Nature Contested: Environmental History in Scotland and Northern England Since 1600* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2000), p. 149.

⁸⁶ Matless, *Landscape and Englishness*, p. 9.

⁸⁷ Lynn Abrams and Callum G. Brown, 'Conceiving the Everyday in the Twentieth Century', in Lynn Abrams and Callum G. Brown (eds.) *A History of Everyday Life in Twentieth Century Scotland* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2010), pp. 2–18 (p. 2).

Research questions

This research originated in some basic questioning: why Scotland might have needed parks in the countryside, what their purpose was, and what they offered that the wider Scottish countryside could not provide. Mapping the sites raised a further question as to why the parks are sited where they are, some remote from one another but others with apparently overlapping catchments. And, given that this initiative arose at a time of significant political, environmental and economic febrility in Scotland, how well did it integrate with other major policy responses being developed at this time? Initial investigation found only limited work on country parks at all, let alone in Scotland, so there was a significant gap not only in understanding of the origins and purpose of an important landscape type, but also of its role as part of a larger sub-national picture in the pre-devolution period.

Despite its limitations, the historiography has opened up further areas of enquiry: did policy evolve over time, and if so, why did the original idea not retain traction? Were the parks effective, and if so for whom; and could they be regarded by 1992 as a successful intervention in countryside policy? Whose values and priorities did they represent, and what interpretation of the countryside was embodied; are there dimensions of class and/or paternalism at work here? To what extent did the parks reflect user need, as opposed to provider expectation? How did the parks respond to the challenges of commodification, marketisation and social inclusion that arose? And, underlying all these questions, how relevant are the conclusions historians and others have reached about country parks, in a specifically Scottish context? These questions have been examined, not to assess the parks' current effectiveness as recreational open space, but rather as a historical analysis of a policy which has brought into being

an important element in the Scottish landscape and which occurred within a multi-faceted political and economic context.

Methodology

As an administrative history of a policy's development and implementation, research attention has inevitably been focussed on the administrative record of that process, which thus forms the core evidence for the study. The principal archival records have proven an especially fruitful source, providing not only a factual record in minutes and documents but also a wealth of informal material such as committee papers prepared by officers, internal correspondence, and records of informal discussions. These have illuminated the rationales behind decisions, the varying perspectives of those concerned, and the external pressures being applied. The archival records of CCS and the Scottish Development Department (SDD) are both exceptionally rich in this type of material, and have been mined systematically and extensively. But, to balance perspective, the archives of other bodies have also been drawn on, including those less committed to the notion of country parks and those with less direct roles in the story. Personal experience of local government structures, administration and record-keeping has proven invaluable in locating, retrieving and interrogating this material.

Extensive use has also been made of published contemporary commentary, in the form of books, articles and media reports, and of unpublished material such as consultants' reports, conference papers, and the like, all of which help to identify the arguments deployed and the pressures placed on decision-makers. An important unpublished source has been Kit Campbell's report for SNH, dated outside the

timeframe of this thesis but with valuable financial data from the CCS era.⁸⁸ Consultants' reports have been treated circumspectly, since they generally follow the practice of reaching the conclusion desired by those commissioning them; it is nevertheless interesting to see what arguments are used (and what evidence is overlooked) in justifying these conclusions.

All 36 sites in the CCS portfolio have been visited, providing a physical landscape context for the archival material and giving insight into the parks' development since designation.⁸⁹ The visits have also enabled exploration of additional features within parks, such as heritage structures and natural areas. Visits have been supplemented by ephemera, mainly leaflets or pamphlets; unfortunately, these are mostly recent, but some older material has been found. This material has been used principally to develop the appendix as a more reliable Country Park Register than CCS was able to achieve, but has also provided insight into aspects of the parks that were promoted (or suppressed), and the audience each was seeking to educate, inform or guide.

Four parks have been studied in greater depth and reported as case studies. These have been selected to provide a range in time, land ownership, geographical spread, and diversity of origin, and provide further insight into the practical and political realities being confronted during implementation. They rely heavily on local archive holdings, and two sites initially considered for inclusion were discarded due to the absence of material, or difficulties over access. The section on sites that did not become country parks has similarly been developed from local archival material, supplemented by

⁸⁸ Campbell, 'The Wood not the Trees' (1997)

⁸⁹ Edinburgh: National Records of Scotland: Countryside Commission for Scotland Archive CCS9/63: Country Park Register.

citations in earlier student theses.⁹⁰ It might have benefitted further from access to the original documentation, but regrettably much of this can no longer be traced.

Inevitably, however, some possible sources have been passed over. The four daily broadsheets for Scotland are at different stages of digitisation, and three of them have significant gaps in their digital archive that coincide with much of the country park era, while the subscription for these services was prohibitively costly. An attempt was made to use the *Press & Journal* archive on microfiche, but proved an eye-wateringly unfruitful use of time. However, the archive files include many relevant press clippings which have been included in analysis.

The Parliamentary debates have also not been used to any significant extent. This material might have provided fresh insights into the arguments around legislation, and the debate at the national and sub-national level. However, as John Sheail points out, the Scottish legislation moved quickly through Parliament and attracted little controversy, so the record offers limited insight.⁹¹ Gordon Cherry has also noted the lack of controversy over the Scottish Bill as it proceeded through the House.⁹²

A further omission has been the possibility of oral history. Many of the protagonists are now deceased, and approaches to some still alive were unsuccessful. The voices of park users would have been difficult to sample and collect in any representative

⁹⁰ Stella Thornton, 'Policy-Making in an Inter-Organisational Network: The Development of Country Parks in Strathclyde and Greater Manchester' (Unpublished PhD thesis, Strathclyde University, 1987); William Taylor, 'Country Park Provision and Resource Utilisation - A Planning Problem' (Unpublished MSc dissertation, Aberdeen University, 1977).

⁹¹ John Sheail, 'The National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act of 1949 – its Origins and Significance' in T.C. Smout (ed.), *Nature, Landscape and People since the Second World War* (Edinburgh: Tuckwell, 2001, pp. 1-12 (p. 10).

⁹² Gordon Cherry, *Environmental Planning 1939-1969: Vol. 2 National Parks and Recreation in the Countryside* (London, HMSO, 1975), pp. 138-139.

way. It was therefore decided that the archival record should be allowed to tell the story contemporaneously, rather than allowing reminiscence to influence perspectives.

The thesis has approached the country parks essentially from their point of origin, in the perceived need for countryside recreation, but there are several other lenses through which they might be viewed. One is the history of town and country planning, and the role given to planners in determining both the need for recreation sites and the most suitable locations where that need could be met. Development planning became a local government responsibility in Scotland in 1947, and evolved further through the designation of green belts in 1960, and the arrival of strategic planning in 1968; but as David Groome pointed out, it was always an area of tension, both between central and local government over direction and interpretation, and between local government and the public, over expectations.⁹³

Country parks are also part of the evolution of public open space, and it could be argued that the approach perpetuates some of the early ideals of parks as tools of social engineering, control and segregation. They can also be accused of exporting urban or proto-industrial recreational features into the countryside: *rus in urbe* in reverse. But they have contributed significantly to land reclamation in post-industrial Scotland, to the economic development of localities in their role as attractions, and to the history of heritage conservation and presentation. And they can be understood as part of Scotland's environmental history, with roles in both nature conservation and awareness-raising, and arriving alongside a rising public awareness in this area, and a more radical environmentalism exemplified by the Caddys' Findhorn Trust in

⁹³ David Groome, *Planning and Rural Recreation in Britain* (Aldershot: Avebury, 1993), pp. 4-5.

Morayshire, established in 1962.⁹⁴ Space constraints have not permitted exploration down these avenues to the extent that might have been possible in a longer discussion.

Outline

The next chapter introduces the reader to the particularities of Scotland in the period under examination, and the economic, social, demographic and political forces in play alongside the challenge represented by burgeoning outdoor recreation; it sets the scene within which Scottish country park policy would emerge and operate. Chapter three, in contrast, looks back to the origins of the idea during the inter-war period, the forces that drove the idea forward, and two particularly influential contributions – an article, and a conference (with important peripheral activity) - that took place in 1965. Chapter four then explores how this culminated in a legislative process framed for Scotland.

From this point onwards, the focus shifts to delivery. In chapter 5, the general implementation of the policy in Scotland is explored, together with its evolution and occasional subversion, while chapters 6 and 7 offer more in-depth exploration through four case studies of individual sites from different points in CCS' lifetime. Chapter 8 then considers sites that might have become country parks, but did not, and the varied reasons behind this. Chapter 9 returns to the themes introduced in the introduction, and uses the evidence presented in chapters 2 -8 to provide a Scottish contribution to the scholarly debate; it is followed by an overall conclusion highlighting key findings and suggesting further areas for study.

⁹⁴ 'About the Findhorn Foundation – History'. www.findhorn.org/about-us/ [accessed 3 April 2018]

Chapter 2: The Scottish Context: Recreation and other issues in the 1960s and 1970s

'I have travelled widely, and I can say that never in any so-called civilised country have I seen worse conditions or a more deprived people than here in Scotland. We have to ask ourselves: "Can this go on?"'

Lady Louise Glen-Coats, 1950¹

Scotland's country parks policy was developed within a wider political context, so it is helpful to understand the picture into which recreation policy generally, and country parks specifically, were positioned, and to examine other forces that were at play politically at this time. This chapter considers Scotland in the period leading up to and immediately after the Countryside (Scotland) Act 1967. Much of the historiography on recreation in this period is Anglo-centric and overlooks the contextual issues distinctive to Scotland; this chapter seeks to address this deficiency.

Urbanisation and housing

Scotland in 1951 was essentially an urban society. Over 40% of the population lived in towns of more than 50,000 people, with half of these in Glasgow alone; just one in

¹ Letter to the press, 1950, cited by Kenneth Roy, *The Invisible Spirit: A life of Post-War Scotland 1945-75* (Prestwick: ICS Books, 2013), p 112. Lady Glen-Coats (d. 1967) was a prominent Paisley industrialist and Chairman of the Scottish Liberal Party, who among other things was instrumental in securing a parliamentary career for Jo Grimond, the future party leader.

three Scots lived in communities of less than 5,000.² The urbanised areas were not wholly unattractive; garden city developments had been attempted, with limited success, suburban cottage and bungalow developments had emerged on urban fringes. But these did little to dilute a more general sense of dilapidation, as Simone de Beauvoir noted when she and Jean-Paul Sartre visited Scotland shortly after the end of hostilities in 1945: 'our hearts sank at the grimness of the towns'.³ Overcrowding was a serious issue, affecting over 15% of Scots (compared with just 2% of English people).⁴ A third of homes in Scotland in 1951 had just one or two rooms; this was true of around half the homes in Glasgow, where over a third of dwellings had no indoor lavatory.⁵ Much of the urban housing was high-density, in tenement blocks of up to four stories, with little or no outdoor space beyond a drying green for washing. The Cullingworth Committee, established in 1965 to examine the condition of social housing in Scotland, concluded that as many as one in three Scots were living in a home unfit for human habitation.⁶ Its report recommended the immediate demolition of over a quarter of a million homes, and the removal of nearly 200,000 more in the succeeding 30 years.⁷ So it is no exaggeration to say that Scottish housing was in crisis, in desperate need of both new development and

² T. C. Smout, *A Century of the Scottish People 1830-1950* (London: Fontana, 1997), p. 32.

³ From *Force of Circumstance* (1968); cited by Smout, *Century of the Scottish People*, p. 33.

⁴ Smout, *Century of the Scottish People*, p. 36.

⁵ Anthony Slaven, *The Development of the West of Scotland, 1750-1960* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1975), p. 251; M. Anderson, 'Population and Family Life' in A. Dickson and J.H. Treble (eds.), *People and Society in Scotland, Vol III, 1914-1990* (Edinburgh: John Donald in association with the Economic and Social History Society of Scotland, 1992), pp. 12-47 (p. 40).

⁶ Christopher Harvie, *Scotland and Nationalism: Scottish Society and Politics 1707-1994* (London: Routledge, 1994), p. 133.

⁷ Roy, *Invisible Spirit*, p. 363.

improvement of the existing stock; the journalist Kenneth Roy identifies this as ‘the greatest single problem in post-war Scotland.’⁸

Lynn Abrams and Linda Fleming have suggested that economic factors such as the cost of land, and the expense of building new homes, frustrated attempts to remedy this situation.⁹ But the weakness of local government in Scotland in this period, the dearth of professional town planners, and the desire of local councillors to retain their rights of patronage in the allocation of new homes, all contributed to the problem. Only limited progress had been made by 1957, when the Earl of Dundee, speaking in the House of Lords, urged Glasgow Corporation to embark on a programme of high rise building, an approach that led to the creation, by 1971, of over 200 tower blocks in the city, containing over 20,000 homes.¹⁰ Glasgow’s new Red Road flats, at over 30 storeys, became the highest residential buildings in Europe.¹¹ Similar developments elsewhere in Scotland meant that one house in every five built between 1945 and 1978 was in a block of six or more storeys; by the 1970s, this proportion had risen to one in three.¹² In Scottish towns in 1970, nearly half the dwellings (47%) were flats or tenements, many of which had little or no private green space; in England and Wales, this proportion was just 14%.¹³

Another approach pursued with vigour by Glasgow Corporation was the creation of large peripheral housing estates. On the fringes of Glasgow, the estate at Castlemilk

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 112.

⁹ Lynn Abrams and Linda Fleming, ‘From Scullery to Conservatory: Everyday Life in the Scottish Home’, in Lynn Abrams and Callum G. Brown (eds.), *A History of Everyday Life in Twentieth Century Scotland* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2010) pp 48-75 (p. 55).

¹⁰ Roy, *Invisible Spirit*, pp. 208-209; Abrams and Fleming, *Everyday Life*, p. 56.

¹¹ Ian H. Adams, *The Making of Urban Scotland* (London: Croom Helm, 1978), p. 180.

¹² Roy, *Invisible Spirit*, p. 208; Abrams and Fleming, *Everyday Life*, p. 56; Adams, *Urban Scotland*, p. 180.

¹³ J.T. Coppock, ‘Leisure in Scotland: A Synoptic View’, in Ian Appleton (ed.), *Leisure Research and Policy* (Edinburgh: Scottish Academic Press, 1974), pp. 233–43 (p. 234).

housed 37,000 people by 1971, and Drumchapel 34,000; Easterhouse, with 57,000 residents, was larger than Hamilton or Dunfermline.¹⁴ Large fringe estates were built elsewhere, too, including at Edinburgh, Clydebank and Dundee. By 1972, publicly owned housing dominated many Scottish burghs to an astonishing extent; in central belt burghs such as Airdrie, Coatbridge and Kilsyth around four out of five homes were council-owned, and in seven other towns the proportion of public sector housing exceeded 60%.¹⁵ Characteristics these estates shared included a low level of car ownership (around 10-15% of households in the four largest council estates had access to a car by the early 1980s, in contrast to 60% of households in England), and a corresponding dependence on limited local facilities and on public transport.¹⁶



Figure 2.1 Typical flats at Duntarvie Quadrant, Easterhouse in 1959 (Photo from Glasgow City Archives, A/32/F/46, used with permission)

¹⁴ Irene Maver, 'The Glasgow Story' <<http://www.theglasgowstory.com/story/?id=TGSFG>> [accessed 6 April 2017]; Bruce Gittings and David Munro, 'Gazetteer for Scotland' <<http://www.scottish-places.info/towns/townfirst489.html>> [accessed 6 April 2017]; PP: *Census*, 1971.

¹⁵ Scottish Institute of Municipal Treasurers and Accountants, cited by Adams, *Urban Scotland*, p. 184.

¹⁶ Abrams and Fleming, 'From Scullery to Conservatory', p. 58; Dept. of Transport: 'Licensed Vehicles by Tax Class, 1909 - 2013', *Dept for Transport Statistics, 2014* at Vehicle Licensing Statistics (<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/vehicles-statistics>) [Accessed 23 September 2014].

In parallel with these measures, Scotland also embarked on a programme of New Town development, beginning at East Kilbride in 1947 and moving on to Glenrothes (1948), Cumbernauld (1955), Livingston (1962) and Irvine (1966).¹⁷ By 1971, almost 180,000 people, mainly from Glasgow and Edinburgh, were housed in one of these towns.¹⁸ They were built on greenfield sites at modest densities, and were expected to attract not only residents relocating from the overcrowded cities, but also inward investment and new jobs. East Kilbride was immediately successful, attracting industry from England and America; Glenrothes less so, as the mine originally intended as its main employer proved unworkable, forcing a change of economic direction towards electronics.¹⁹ Livingston was expected to revitalise West Lothian following the run-down of the local shale oil industry, and although overspill mitigation and slum clearance in the cities remained important to New Towns, the Scottish Office also gave them a more positive, economic development role.²⁰

A major consequence of these developments was a redistribution of the population, especially in the central belt. Some cities and towns saw significant population reductions: Cowdenbeath shrank by a fifth between 1951 and 1971 as coal extraction declined; more tellingly, so did the vastly larger population of Glasgow as its slums were cleared. But the decline was not universal; several places remained static in population terms in this period, and others increased in size.²¹ In the cities, population figures conceal a redistribution away from the inner areas to peripheral estates within the same local authority boundaries. Overall, Scotland's population was generally

¹⁷ David Cowling, *An Essay for Today: The Scottish New Towns, 1947 to 1997* (Edinburgh: Rutland, 1997), pp. 8-9. A further New Town proposed at Stonehouse was dropped from the programme.

¹⁸ PP: *Census*, 1971.

¹⁹ Adams, *Urban Scotland*, pp. 212, 214.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 215, 218.

²¹ PP: *Census 1971: County Reports for Scotland* (Edinburgh: HMSO, 1972 and 1973).

static from 1950 to 1980, and fell only slightly in the subsequent two decades; but this stasis conceals major change at the local level, and contrasts with growth in other parts of the UK.²²

The Scottish economy

There was a strong economic rationale behind this redistribution. Although many Scots were better off in the 1950s than they had been in the inter-war years, this relative prosperity was not evenly shared across the workforce, nor across the country's geography.²³ An economic restructuring took place between 1950 and 1980, whereby the traditional industries of textiles, steel, coal and heavy engineering went into rapid decline, exacerbated to some degree by their interdependence.²⁴ Between 1958 and 1967, 119 of Scotland's 166 coal mines were closed, and by 1982 just 14 were left open – four of which remained at serious risk of closure.²⁵ Four out of every five Lanarkshire miners lost their jobs between 1951 and 1971; there were similar levels of mining-related worklessness in Stirlingshire, West Lothian and Fife.²⁶ The development of a new steel plant at Ravenscraig, near Motherwell, in the late 1950s

²² C.G. Brown, 'Charting Everyday Experience', in Lynn Abrams and Callum G. Brown (eds.) *A History of Everyday Life in Twentieth Century Scotland* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2010), pp. 19–47 (p. 20), citing mid-year population estimates.

²³ Smout, *Century of the Scottish People*, p. 117.

²⁴ A. Dickson and J.H. Treble, 'Scotland 1914-1990', in A. Dickson and J.H. Treble (eds.), *People and Society in Scotland Vol III, 1914-1990* (Edinburgh: John Donald in association with the Economic and Social History Society of Scotland, 1992), pp. 1–11 (p. 1).

²⁵ National Coal Board Annual Reports, cited by Peter L. Payne, 'The Decline of the Scottish Heavy Industries, 1945-1983', in R. Saville (ed.), *The Economic Development of Modern Scotland, 1950-1980* (Edinburgh: John Donald, 1985), pp. 79–133 (pp. 88, 93).

²⁶ Stuart McDowall, 'Coal, Gas and Oil: The Changing Energy Scene in Scotland 1950-1980' in R. Saville (ed.), *The Economic Development of Modern Scotland, 1950-1980* (Edinburgh: John Donald, 1985), pp. 292-311 (p. 295).

failed to address the fundamental weaknesses in the Scottish steel industry, and demand for steel collapsed after 1973; Ravenscraig struggled on until eventual closure in 1992.²⁷ Moreover, the boom in shipbuilding after the end of the war was not sustained in the face of international competition. Between 1963 and 1965 five major Clydeside shipyards were closed, and a sixth only kept open by state intervention; it eventually failed in 1971.²⁸ And employment in textile manufacture, concentrated in Paisley and Dundee, halved between 1958 and 1973.²⁹

To some extent, these industries were replaced by expansion in banking, insurance, and light engineering (especially electronics), while the discovery of oil under the North Sea in the mid-sixties brought a major new industry to the north-east of Scotland. Some new workplaces were provided on land reclaimed from post-industrial dereliction, but many advance factories were directed to greenfield sites, often in the New Towns, or to sites strategically close to new communications infrastructure such as the Forth Road Bridge or the M8 motorway.³⁰ State intervention proved essential to facilitate this change, providing incentives for relocation and inward investment, as well as direct intervention in the form of two major new motor vehicle factories at Linwood and Bathgate and a new aluminium smelter at Invergordon.³¹

²⁷ Payne, *Heavy Industries*, p. 99; 'Ravenscraig', <<http://ravenscraig.co.uk/about-the-project/>> [accessed 10 April 2017].

²⁸ Payne, *Heavy Industries*, pp. 105-106.

²⁹ J. N. Randall, 'New Town and New Industries', in R. Saville (ed.), *The Economic Development of Modern Scotland, 1950-1980* (Edinburgh: John Donald, 1985), pp. 245-69 (p. 248).

³⁰ J. Foster, 'A Proletarian Nation? Occupation and Class Since 1914', in A. Dickson and J.H. Treble (eds.), *People and Society in Scotland Vol III, 1914-1990* (Edinburgh: John Donald in association with the Economic and Social History Society of Scotland, 1992), pp. 201-40 (p. 212).

³¹ W. Knox, 'Class, Work and Trade Unionism in Scotland' in A. Dickson and J.H. Treble (eds.), *People and Society in Scotland Vol III, 1914-1990* (Edinburgh: John Donald in association with the Economic and Social History Society of Scotland, 1992), pp. 108-37 (p.109).

A significant consequence of this rapid economic transformation was the impact that it had on those communities that had been dependent on a single industry for a large part of their local economy. These included not only hundreds of small mining communities across central Scotland, but also larger towns such as Clydebank, where shipbuilding had been a mainstay of the local workforce, and Coatbridge, heavily reliant on its foundries. The results were not only high levels of unemployment in some communities, but also severe and persistent dereliction of the sites previously occupied by industry. A county council survey in 1958 at Lochgelly, in the Fife coalfield, revealed that 14% of the local land was derelict; this was long before the closure of the massive Mary colliery complex at Lochore created a further enormous eyesore.³² Christopher Harvie was being provocative when he suggested that a swathe of post-industrial communities across central Scotland could usefully have been demolished, but his suggestion does respond to the conditions and quality of life in what were often isolated and badly run-down communities lacking in either opportunity or investment.³³

³² J. McNeil, 'Land Reclamation and Rehabilitation: Central Fife, 1960-80', *Scottish Geographical Magazine*, 104.3 (1988), 146–54 (p. 147).

³³ Christopher Harvie, *No Gods and Precious Few Heroes: Scotland, 1914-1980* (London: Edward Arnold, 1981), p. 66.



Figure 2.2. Derelict mining land and burning spoil heap at Glenraig, near Lochgelly, Fife in the 1960s (Michael Martin collection, used with permission). The structure in the background is now incorporated in Lochore Meadows Country Park.

Planning and regeneration

In 1961, a Committee of Inquiry into the Scottish economy produced the Tothill Report, promoting improved infrastructure and a more planned economy, with an emphasis on new industries and a focus for state intervention. Historians have widely differing opinions on Tothill's merits and substance, but it was taken very seriously at the time.³⁴ It led to the creation of the SDD, with responsibility for economic development, and to a White Paper in 1963 that sought to address some of the issues of the central belt.³⁵ Acknowledging the problems of 'squalor and decay' in parts of

³⁴ For example, Iain Hutchison characterises it as 'highly influential' and a 'significant landmark'. Kenneth Roy, however, sees it as over-emphasising image above substance, and criticises its 'phonyness'. I.G.C. Hutchison, 'Government', in T. M. Devine and R. J. Finlay (eds.), *Scotland in the Twentieth Century* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1996), pp. 46–63 (p. 48); Roy, *Invisible Spirit*, pp. 272–275.

³⁵ PP: Cmnd 2188: *Central Scotland: A Programme for Development and Growth* (Edinburgh: HMSO, 1963).

central Scotland, the White Paper redefined some of these as 'growth areas', where 'facelifting' and a 'new look' would improve local morale, and, crucially, make areas more attractive for prospective new employers.³⁶ This would be facilitated by an increased level of funding under the Local Employment Act 1960, hitherto a somewhat tokenistic measure which offered municipal authorities up to 50% of the eligible costs of rehabilitating derelict land back to basic agricultural quality. The White Paper raised the level of subvention to 85% for designated growth areas, putting more reclamation work within the financial reach of local authorities; this followed SDD recognition that a 'more liberal interpretation' of eligibility would be needed to achieve the level of reclamation being sought.³⁷ The White Paper also noted the potential for recreation provision on reclaimed land.³⁸ The growth areas included several rundown localities recognisably in need of this support, but also extended into the New Towns, highlighting their prominence in contemporary economic thinking.³⁹

A further economic White Paper in 1966 again drew attention to 'the poor quality of the urban environment' in much of central Scotland, and the importance of providing 'basic services and recreational facilities' that might encourage potential investors.⁴⁰ It noted the importance of high-visibility locations such as the M74 corridor on its approach to Glasgow, and encouraged local authorities to take advantage of the

³⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 9, 22.

³⁷ Edinburgh: National Records of Scotland: SDD Archives DD12/1136: Memo from C. D. Smith to Secretary of State, 31 December 1964.

³⁸ PP: Cmnd. 2188, pp. 6, 25.

³⁹ PP: Cmnd. 2188, p. 9

⁴⁰ PP: Cmnd. 2864: *The Scottish Economy, 1965 to 1970: A Plan for Expansion* (Edinburgh, HMSO, 1966), pp. 37, 42.

provision for ‘facelift’ schemes to clear up unsightly eyesores, an issue where councils were apparently showing insufficient diligence.⁴¹

Tourism

The White Paper also saw the potential for tourism based on Scotland’s scenic beauty and the possibilities the countryside offered for outdoor recreation, and called for facilities better geared to the higher expectations of visitors, and better promotion.⁴² In this respect, it was restating and widening an earlier, but still largely ineffective, commitment to developing tourism for Scotland’s economic benefit, expressed in White Papers in 1950 and again in 1959, and given prominence in the responsibilities of the HIDB, established in 1965.⁴³ Scottish authorities were, however, often ambivalent about tourism, with some taking a largely detached position and others acting quite defensively. In part, this ambivalence derived from the seasonal nature of tourism, which made it a less valuable panacea for economic problems than solutions with a year-round business model; but other factors were also in play. A conservation orientation predominated in some local authorities, a position that has echoes of attitudes to the country park, seeing tourism as a threat to be contained and managed, rather than as an opportunity for economic diversification.⁴⁴ There is also evidence that, while some authorities welcomed tourism and its potential contribution (East Lothian is a prime example), others were more reluctant to engage with the

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 42; Edinburgh: National Records of Scotland: SDD archives: DD12/1137: Memo from C. Scott-Whyte to colleagues, 22 September 1965.

⁴² PP: Cmnd. 2864, pp. 34-35.

⁴³ PP: Cmnd. 7976: *A Programme of Highland Development* (Edinburgh: HMSO, 1950), p. 17-18; Cmnd 785: *Review of Highland Policy* (London, HMSO, 1959), p. 9.

⁴⁴ J. Heeley, ‘Tourism in Britain: An Historical Perspective’, *Town Planning Review*, 52.1 (1981), 61–79 (p. 70).

opportunity. The SDD's 1962 circular requiring local authorities to produce plans for tourism development, partly to mitigate its impact on scenic locations, met with a response that can only be described as patchy, and was repeated, with a tighter deadline, in 1964.⁴⁵ Even as late as 1971, when tourism had become one of the largest industries in Scotland, some authorities were indicating to researchers that 'they did not wish to encourage recreation and tourism in [their] counties'.⁴⁶ The failure to co-ordinate tourism policy across local authority boundaries was persistently problematic, as on Speyside, where recreational development in the late 1980s contributed significantly to visitor pressure in the adjacent Cairngorm scenic area.⁴⁷

Limitations of public transport, and a shortage of overnight accommodation, meant that tourism in Scotland was heavily dependent on the private car and the caravan, and was impeded by a lack of facilities for motorists even at major tourist attractions like Loch Lomond.⁴⁸ Private investment in tourism may have been hindered by the reluctance of some local authorities to invest in infrastructure; the authorities argued that they could not justify spending for people who were not their ratepayers.⁴⁹ This was a situation which required government intervention, and two attempts were made in the 1960s to legislate for facilities provision for tourism and recreational visiting. A Bill was drafted in 1961, largely in response to advocacy from NTS, aiming to set up a small grant scheme to enhance the natural beauty of the countryside, plant trees, restore derelict land and deal with litter problems – essentially a fund to support visiting

⁴⁵ PP: Circular SDD 2/1962, June 1962; SDD Circular SDD 15/1964, April 1964.

⁴⁶ Coppock and Duffield, *Spatial Analysis*, p. x; D.C. Nicholls, 'Tourism in Scotland', in I. Appleton (ed.), *Leisure Research and Policy* (Edinburgh: Scottish Academic Press, 1974), pp. 161–70 (p. 161).

⁴⁷ Murray P. Ferguson, 'National Parks for Scotland?', *Scottish Geographical Magazine*, 104.1 (1988), 36–40 (p. 39).

⁴⁸ Nicholls, *Tourism in Scotland*, p. 167.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 168.

the countryside.⁵⁰ The Bill was lost, however, when the Association of County Councils of Scotland (ACCS) objected to the creation of an intermediate body to manage the scheme; they feared erosion of their own relationship with the Scottish Office.⁵¹ A further attempt in 1965 included provisions for a fund created from a levy on the hotel industry; this time the accommodation industry joined its opponents, and again the Bill failed.⁵² The Secretary of State noted 'the problem in Scotland is not basically conservation...but rather positive, forward-looking development' – by which he presumably meant the lack of it.⁵³ He was effectively restating Grieve's rhetorical question from 1962: did Scotland really want tourism at all, or were authorities' attitudes essentially directed at protecting the scenery for their own residents, while limiting the enjoyment of others?⁵⁴

Access and conservation

A key issue with tourism has always been the balance between the numbers of visitors to be encouraged or permitted, and the potential for them to damage the scenic beauty they come to enjoy. Scotland's issue in this respect has longevity; Punch satirised the problem in a cartoon as early as 1908.⁵⁵

⁵⁰ Cherry, *Environmental Planning*, pp. 145–46; Edinburgh: National Records of Scotland: SDD Archives DD12/2656: Instructions to drafters, p. 44.

⁵¹ Cherry, *Environmental Planning*, p. 146.

⁵² *Ibid.*, p. 147.

⁵³ Edinburgh: National Records of Scotland: SDD Archives DD12/3010: Announcement by Secretary of State, 17 November 1965.

⁵⁴ Grieve, 'Planning for Tourism', pp. 1–2.

⁵⁵ Punch Almanack, 1908; cartoon reproduced in CCS, *The Caravan in Scotland: Chaos or Compatibility?* (Perth: CCS/Scottish Civic Trust, 1971).

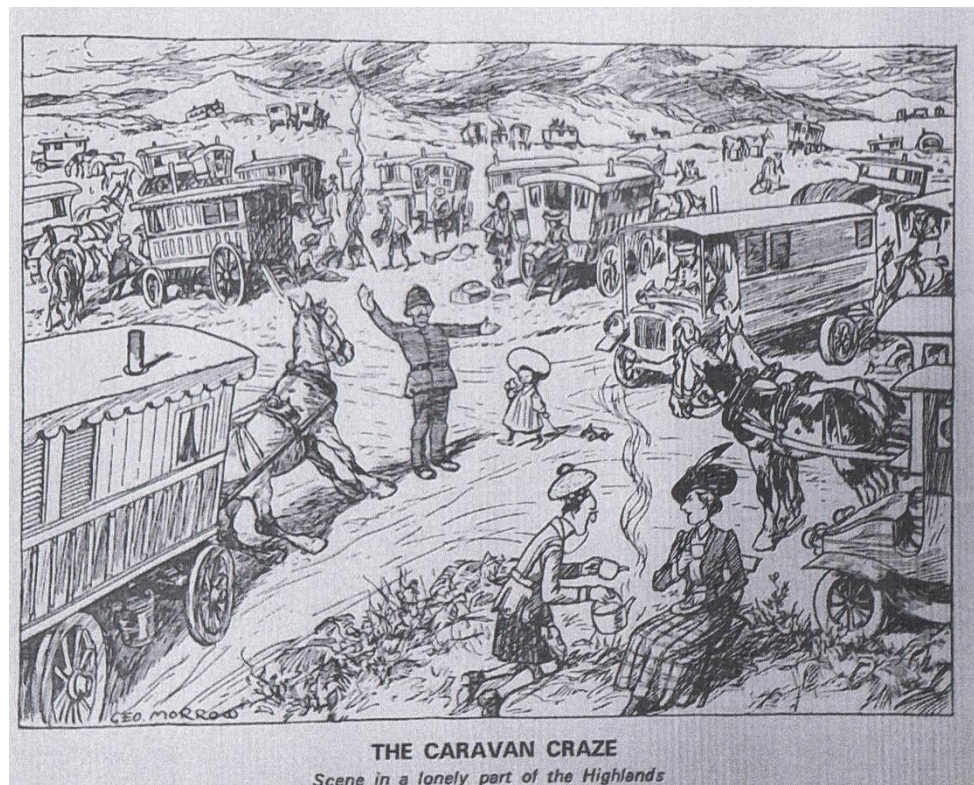


Figure 2.3: Punch Almanack Cartoon, 1908 satirising tourism in the highlands; from 'The Caravan in Scotland: Chaos or Compatibility?' (Perth, CCS/Scottish Civic Trust, 1971)

Cairn Gorm offers a case study in this respect, first through the establishment of a ski centre and associated infrastructure in the 1950s, which became the thirteenth different recreational land use logged in the area.⁵⁶ This addition had serious consequences for visual amenity, as did plans to expand the facilities in 1981 and 1990. Both proposals were rejected on amenity grounds after public inquiry, but a further plan in 1993 succeeded in creating a funicular railway enabling visitor access to the mountain. The result was, arguably, a tourist attraction in its own right, boosting the local economy and prolonging the visitor season, but at significant amenity cost and in a highly sensitive ecological setting. One influential commentator described it

⁵⁶ Edinburgh: National Records of Scotland: SDD Archive: DD 35/82: Interim Report of Technical Group on Cairngorm area, January 1964.

as ‘a triumph of crass materialism over wildness and the authority of nature’.⁵⁷ Difficulties had also arisen over a Nature Conservancy proposal to establish a large National Nature Reserve (NNR) in the Cairngorms in 1952, and again in nearby Glen Feshie in 1961, both giving rise to protests at the damage that access restrictions would cause to tourism.⁵⁸ Robert Grieve at the HIDB shrewdly told the Conservancy that they had to accept recreational use in NNRs or be overrun by it anyway; the solution lay not in banning visitors, but in managing them.⁵⁹ This difficulty of achieving an appropriate balance between conservation and access was widespread; Dudley Stamp described Scotland’s *embarras de richesse* of nature reserves as being under great pressure from the desire to see these places, rehearsing an argument that would be echoed frequently throughout the history of countryside recreation.⁶⁰



Figure 2.4: Funicular railway at Cairn Gorm (Author's collection)

⁵⁷ Charles Warren, *Managing Scotland's Environment* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2002), p. 300, quoting the eminent naturalist Sir John Lister-Kaye. Lister-Kaye (1946 -) is a naturalist and author with an affinity for the highlands, and a former colleague of Gavin Maxwell of otter fame, who became a conservation champion after the *Torrey Canyon* disaster in 1967. The Cairngorm controversy is mapped out in detail by Warren, pp. 293-300.

⁵⁸ John Sheail, *Nature Conservation in Britain: The Formative Years* (Huntingdon: HMSO/Institute of Terrestrial Ecology, 1998), p. 51.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 138.

⁶⁰ Dudley Stamp, *Nature Conservation in Britain* (London: Collins, 1969), p. 178.

Placing restrictions on access, however, would be problematic in Scotland. Although the 1932 Kinder Scout trespass is probably the best-known access protest in the UK, Scotland's history in this regard can be traced back to 1823, when a landowner's attempt to block a recreational footpath at Dalmarnock led to a riot, military intervention, and 43 arrests.⁶¹ A further incident, again involving physical violence, occurred in Glen Tilt in 1847, when the Duke of Atholl sought to prevent access to his estate by a group of university students on a field trip.⁶² The access issue was further exacerbated by the growth in popularity of field sports in the nineteenth century, an activity which demanded both the reservation of large amounts of land and the exclusion of casual visitors.⁶³ Nevertheless, an outdoor movement had developed in Scotland towards the end of the nineteenth century, and expanded in the inter-war period, extending mountaineering and hill walking from a largely middle-class pursuit into working-class communities; the 1930s 'mountain men' [*sic*] included two who would later play an important part in recreation policy, Bob Grieve and Tom Weir.⁶⁴

Rambling and hill-walking grew further in popularity after the Second World War, and one of the problems facing advocates of national parks for Scotland was the fear that designation would allow free access to uncultivated land as of right.⁶⁵ This was certainly the intention in England and Wales leading up to the 1949 Act, although

⁶¹ 'Full Report of the Banks of the Clyde Case from the Jury Court, Edinburgh', in *Scots Times*, 13 January 1826; J. F. S. Gordon (ed.), *Glasgow Ancient and Modern: The History of Glasgow from the Earliest to the Present Times* (Glasgow: John Tweed, 1872), pp. 783–87.

⁶² T.C. Smout, *Nature Contested*, pp. 149–150.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, pp. 151, 161.

⁶⁴ H. Taylor, *A Claim on the Countryside: A History of the British Outdoor Movement* (Edinburgh: Keele University Press, 1997), p. 234. Tom Weir (1914–2006) was a climber, naturalist and broadcaster, perhaps best known for *Weir's Way*, a countryside programme on Scottish television, and his regular columns in newspapers and magazines. A statue of Weir – complete with iconic tourie – was erected in 2015 by public subscription at Balmaha on Loch Lomondside. (*The Friends' Voice* 15, Spring/Summer 2015)

⁶⁵ Ann MacEwen and Malcolm MacEwen, *Greenprints for the Countryside? The Story of Britain's National Parks* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1987), p. 10.

access was expected to be by negotiated agreement rather than imposed from above.⁶⁶ But to those familiar with Scottish traditions of land access, it may seem strange that landowners feared something which most of them already permitted for much of the year; the issue seems to have been a perceived loss of the right to control access, rather than a fear of visitors *per se*. Scotland has sometimes been thought to have had no law of trespass, but this is a myth; what it had instead is a permissive tradition of open access to uncultivated land through the forbearance of landowners, with no absolute right to roam freely. Landowners could, and did, impede access when it suited their interests to do so, especially at times of the year when stock and game management was important, or when hunting and shooting were taking place. Several ramblers contributed to an access review with tales of being refused access to, or being ejected from, estates.⁶⁷ For their part, some ramblers deliberately sought confrontation by planning routes that would interfere with deer-stalking.⁶⁸ The SLF emphasised landowners' role as stewards of the national heritage in landscape; they expressed their concern over the impact of uncontrolled access on food and timber production – both of which were national priorities in the post-war period – and urged a solution based on education towards correct behaviour in the countryside.⁶⁹ Land use conflict over field sports was also a major factor in the Scottish countryside, arousing strong opinions: landowners drew attention to the economic and ecological

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 14.

⁶⁷ Glasgow: Strathclyde University Library: Scottish Countryside Activities Council Archive: Letter S. Strachan to Irene Addie, 9 March 1993.

⁶⁸ Taylor, *Claim on the Countryside*, p. 139.

⁶⁹ Fergusson of Kilkerran, 'Public Recreation in the Countryside', p. 3.

value of field sports, while their opponents challenged these positions with equal vigour.⁷⁰

There were also issues over access to water, and to water catchment areas. The Water Acts required water authorities to protect their supply from contamination, and to maintain their attractiveness, and before the Countryside (Scotland) Act 1967 they interpreted this as requiring them to keep their resource free from the pollution caused by human interference. Relatively few reservoirs in Scotland were treated, and the authorities were correspondingly more risk-averse in respect of recreational use.⁷¹ A water authority spokesman in 1971 complained about ‘the wrong sort of people’ visiting Muirshiel’s reservoirs, leaving litter, interfering with intake works, and (in unspecified ways) ‘contaminating’ the supply.⁷²

In the forests, however, the FC had taken a more accommodating approach, opening up access to their plantations from as early as 1936 and designating these areas as ‘forest parks’, of which there were four by 1954.⁷³ This approach was described by Tom Weir as ‘intelligent multipurpose use of forest and mountain’.⁷⁴ Whilst acknowledging that their priority was timber management and production, the FC had long recognised a legitimate demand for (and revenue potential in) outdoor recreation,

⁷⁰ Hugh Oliver-Bellasis, ‘Fieldsports’, in H. Talbot-Ponsonby (ed.), *Changing Land Use and Recreation* (Bristol: Countryside Recreation and Research Action Group, 1988), pp. 54–55 (p. 55); A. Wightman *et al*, ‘The Cultural Politics of Hunting: Sporting Estates and Recreational Land Use in the Highlands and Islands of Scotland’, *Culture, Sport, Society*, 5.1 (2002), 53–70 (p. 61).

⁷¹ J. Foster, ‘What Is Meant by Outdoor Recreation’, in I. Appleton (ed.), *Leisure Research and Policy* (Edinburgh: Scottish Academic Press, 1974), pp. 156–60 (p. 158). John Foster was the first Director of CCS.

⁷² W.T. Deveney, ‘The Effect of Public Access on Water Authority Land’, in ‘Regional Parks: Report of a Symposium’ (Unpublished conference report, Renfrew County Council, 1971), pp. 7–8 (p. 8).

⁷³ T.C. Smout, ‘Patterns of Culture’, in A. Dickson and J.H. Treble (eds.), *People and Society in Scotland Vol III, 1914-1990* (Edinburgh: John Donald in association with the Economic and Social History Society of Scotland, 1992), pp. 261–81 (p. 273).

⁷⁴ T. Weir, ‘The Scottish Countryside in 1967’, *Town and Country Planning*, 35.6 (1967), 309–12 (p. 310).

and this was adopted formally as policy in 1963, and became a statutory duty in 1967.⁷⁵ Early success with day visitors was followed by the development of campsites, caravan sites, and even log cabins.⁷⁶ But not all forest landowners were completely happy with recreation on their holdings, and Lt. Col. Grant of Rothiemurchus urged preventative measures and compensation for damage caused through recreation, while some other private woodland owners sought tax reliefs in return for recreational access concessions.⁷⁷

Recreational pressures

The demand for outdoor recreation, and for space in which to pursue it, was clearly growing, even if it defied reliable quantification; this in turn led to exaggeration for effect. Bill Murray, a Scottish Rambler and mountaineer, described a 'volcanic explosion sending tidal waves of humanity rolling into the countryside' in the late 1960s, but Terry Coppock's analysis indicates that recreational pressures felt in England at this time were less acute in Scotland.⁷⁸ There was anecdotal evidence of recreational

⁷⁵ J. Sinden and L. Sinden: *A Forest Recreation Survey*, cited by Taylor, 'Country Park Provision', p. 8; T.C. Smout, *Nature Contested*, p. 62; W.G. Jeffrey, 'Cities and Their Sylvan Setting', in A. B. Cruikshank (ed.), *Where Town Meets Country: Problems of Peri-Urban Areas in Scotland* (Aberdeen: Aberdeen University Press, 1982), pp. 51–58 (p. 52).

⁷⁶ Forestry Commission: *The Forestry Commission and Recreation: Policy Paper No. 2* (Edinburgh, 1984).

⁷⁷ Edinburgh: National Records of Scotland: Countryside Commission for Scotland Archive CCS6/1: Papers for meeting 1 December 1969; T.D. Cotter-Craig, 'The Role of the Private Woodland Owner', in J. Tivy and G. Dickinson (eds.), 'Land Resources for Recreation in Scotland' (Unpublished conference report, 1976), pp. 17–20 (p. 19).

⁷⁸ Glasgow: Strathclyde University Library: Scottish Countryside Activities Council Archive: Executive Committee papers: W.H. Murray: 'The Scottish Countryside Today' in *The Scottish Countryside – The Future* (Rambler's Association n. d. but c. 1968); J.T. Coppock, 'The Recreational Use of Land and Water in Rural Britain', *Tijdschrift Voor Economische En Sociale Geografie*, 57.May-June (1966), 81–96 (p. 83). W.H. (Bill) Murray (1913-1996) was a Scottish mountaineer and author who is credited with popularising Scottish climbing; he became an activist for conservation of highland scenery. (Obituary, *The Independent*, 31 March 1996)

issues at a number of locations, and criticism of unsympathetic development, such as Frank Fraser Darling's observations on the tackiness of visitor provision at Kyle of Lochalsh and Mallaig.⁷⁹ A late-sixties study by the Scottish Countryside Activities Council (SCAC) identified a need for more visitor-related infrastructure, and for improved visitor management and regulation.⁸⁰ But overall, the evidence suggests that the number of Scottish locations coming under genuine pressure from recreationalists was actually quite limited, that this pressure fluctuated seasonally and in other ways, and that Coppock's conclusion was by and large correct.

There were nevertheless two areas that gave rise to significant concern. One, the Cairngorms, has already been considered, but a second area of recreational pressure, with larger numbers involved, was Loch Lomond. The loch's natural beauty, its iconic status as a landscape celebrated in Scott (*Rob Roy*) and in popular song, and its proximity to (and easy access from) Clydeside, made it a very popular destination for an outing. Abercrombie's 1946 Clyde Valley Redevelopment Plan proposed establishing a visitor centre at Balloch, at the southern end of the loch, and this ambition was restated in Dunbartonshire County Council's Development Plan of 1961; clearly visitor numbers were even then at a level thought to require a response from the authorities.⁸¹ The situation caught the attention of regional television, with one

⁷⁹ Frank Fraser Darling, 'Scotland', in R. Jellis (ed.), *Land and People: The Countryside for Use and Leisure* (London: BBC Publications, 1966), pp. 64–71 (p. 66). Sir Frank Fraser Darling (1903-1979) was an ecologist and conservationist with an interest in Scotland. He researched works on deer, seabirds and seals and became Director of the West Highland Survey at Ardnamurchan in 1944. His Reith Lectures in 1969 focussed on human responsibility for the environment.

https://www.rse.org.uk/cms/files/fellows/biographical_index/fells_indexp1.pdf [Accessed 15 September 2017]

⁸⁰ Glasgow: Strathclyde University Library: Scottish Countryside Activities Council Archive: Executive Committee papers: Conference report: 'The Scottish Countryside – The Future' (Ramblers' Association, n. d. but c. 1968)

⁸¹ D.C. Nicholls and A. Young, *Recreation and Tourism in the Loch Lomond Area* (Glasgow: University of Glasgow, 1968), pp. 1-2.

local resident commenting on families 'sitting bumper to bumper right along the loch side...nowhere to go, nothing to do but just gaze out of the car.'⁸² Many people did nevertheless find things to do, and an important dimension was the clash between incompatible forms of recreation competing for use of the same land or water space – for instance, reflective ramblers and noisy picnickers, or those whose powerboats disturbed, and drove fish away from, freshwater anglers. Another was the pressure to add commercial value to the site through new facilities that were not always in keeping with their setting.⁸³ However, even the Loch Lomond issue was later acknowledged as only an intermittent one, largely confined to summer Sundays. As elsewhere, it had been expedient to overstate the problem.⁸⁴

Exaggeration apart, there can be little doubt that recreation caused damage and degradation to the environment. Physical damage included erosion, trampling or picking of plants, stock disturbance, or fires, which exacerbated the visual or amenity damage caused by the presence of large numbers of vehicles within the view, and the noise and disturbance their occupants created at places of tranquillity and peace. Landowners and conservationists alike complained about the impact of recreation, the visitors' ignorance of country ways and appropriate behaviour, and the disturbance of their stock and game. The Duke of Edinburgh was among them, complaining in 1965

⁸² Edinburgh: National Library of Scotland: Scottish Screen Archive T1732: *Loch Lomond* (Scottish Television, 1965).

⁸³ Nicholls and Young, *Loch Lomond*, p. 2.

⁸⁴ B.K. Parnell, 'Urban Fringe and Green Belt', in P. H. Selman (ed.), *Countryside Planning in Practice: The Scottish Experience* (Stirling: Stirling University Press, 1988), pp. 225–46 (p. 229).

that 'areas [of the Balmoral estate] which used to carry a lot of deer...are now perfectly blank because of the constant stream of people going to and fro'.⁸⁵

This anecdotal evidence did not, however, represent the full picture. In 1962, the NTS had commissioned Bill Murray to carry out a survey of the 'regions of supreme landscape value' in Scotland with a view to recommending areas for national park designation.⁸⁶ Murray set his own criteria for acceptance or rejection of different localities on the grounds of scenic quality and the extent to which it had been compromised. He surveyed 52 areas in the north and west of Scotland, but accepted just 21 of these as meeting his standards, nine of which were nevertheless impaired in some way. His excluded areas were (he thought) disfigured or damaged; the main culprits were energy installations such as pylons, insensitive silviculture, and forestry access roads.⁸⁷ Although he noted a large recreational presence in some remote locations, and an 'inundation' of tourists at Loch Lomond and in the Trossachs, it is clear from his study that he regarded the damage to amenity caused or permitted by landowners and rural industry to be much more detrimental than any recreational impact he encountered.⁸⁸ And Sydney Harrison, in his valedictory message as editor of the *Scottish Field* in 1963, felt able to celebrate the ways in which opportunities for recreation had been secured without damage to the scenery.⁸⁹ A more qualified, but nonetheless confirmatory, view emerged 25 years later, when a SCAC survey

⁸⁵ 'The Countryside in 1970', *Proceedings of the Second Conference, 1965* (London: Royal Society of Arts, 1966), p. 59.

⁸⁶ W.H. Murray, *Highland Landscape: A Survey* (Aberdeen: National Trust for Scotland; Aberdeen University Press, 1962), p. 7.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 13-16.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, pp 44-56, 70.

⁸⁹ *Scottish Field*, September 1963, p. 24, cited by Andrew Blaikie, 'Picturing the Hills: The Emergent Ecology of the Scottish Field, 1930-1970' in *Place and Space in Scottish Literature and Culture* (Gdansk: University of Gdansk, 2015)', p. 24.

highlighted forestry and forest roadways alongside litter and skiing as major countryside challenges.⁹⁰ Recreation, it seemed, was a convenient scapegoat but far from the whole story of landscape degradation.

The governance of Scotland

Although Scotland was subject to Westminster in this pre-devolution era, it retained a separate institutional identity, including a distinctive legal system requiring separate legislation to enact Westminster's will in Scotland. Scotland was administered by a separate civil service in the Scottish Office in Edinburgh, under the direction of a Scottish Secretary responsible for all matters pertaining to Scotland. Individual departments managed specific functions; one of these was the SDD, responsible for local government, planning, and economic development among other concerns.⁹¹ Although formal decisions affecting Scotland were made in Westminster, in practice, Kellas suggests, they were often resolved in informal dealings or opaque inter-departmental committees within the Scottish Office, which enjoyed a measure of autonomy, with 'a tendency to be more independent and more pro-active' than its counterparts in other UK regions.⁹² This autonomy extended to the distribution of the

⁹⁰ Glasgow: Strathclyde University Library: Scottish Countryside Activities Council Archive Executive Committee papers: Questionnaire survey results, 1987.

⁹¹ Christopher Harvie, *No Gods*, p. 113; John S. Gibson, *The Thistle and the Crown: A History of the Scottish Office* (Edinburgh: HMSO, 1985), p. 141.

⁹² James G. Kellas, *The Scottish Political System* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), p. 28; Hugh Atkinson and Stuart Wilks-Heeg, *Local Government from Thatcher to Blair: The politics of Creative Autonomy* (Cambridge: Polity, 2000), p. 229.

block grant received from central government, including the allocation of funding to local authorities.⁹³

The politics academic James Kellas has commented that ‘separate laws engender separate politics and administration...a whole host of vested interests is thereby established.’⁹⁴ The political historians Michael Keating and Arthur Midwinter note that the Scottish Office was especially susceptible to pressure from Scottish interests, and identify ‘insider groups’ with ‘particularly close and informal’ influence; Kellas names these groups as the SLF, the NFU and the NTS.⁹⁵ Jamie Stormonth Darling, Secretary of the NTS, was said, enigmatically, to have ‘access’ at a high level, an influence which he proved willing to exercise.⁹⁶ The historian Michael Fry suggests that the SDD was more responsive to vested interests and pressure groups than it was to public opinion.⁹⁷ Its typical response to a new responsibility was the creation of a purely Scottish quango extending its powers of patronage in the appointment of board members.⁹⁸

The Secretary of State for Scotland represented the UK governing party, which was not necessarily the best-supported party in Scotland; this could be a source of political tension.⁹⁹ After the Second World War, successive Secretaries of State had an

⁹³ Allan McConnell, *Scottish Local Government* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2004), p. 226.

⁹⁴ Kellas, *The Scottish Political System*, p. 26.

⁹⁵ Michael Keating and Arthur Midwinter, *The Government of Scotland: Patterns of Influence in Public Policy Making* (Edinburgh: Mainstream Publishing, 1983), pp. 70, 73. James G. Kellas, *Modern Scotland: The Nation Since 1870* (London: Pall Mall Press, 1968), p. 171.

⁹⁶ Edinburgh: National Records of Scotland: SDD Archives DD12/2846: Notes on meeting between Jamie Stormonth Darling and Chairman of National Parks Commission in 1964, copied to SDD. Sir James ‘Jamie’ Stormonth Darling (1918-2000) was Secretary, and later Director, of the NTS for 34 years and is described in his *The Herald* obituary (22 April 2000) as a pioneer of partnership working. Under his leadership the Trust expanded significantly both its holdings and its membership.

⁹⁷ Michael Fry, *Patronage and Principle: A Political History of Modern Scotland* (Aberdeen: Aberdeen University Press, 1987), p. 237.

⁹⁸ Gibson, *Thistle and Crown*, p. 174; Fry, *Patronage and Principle*, p. 241.

⁹⁹ Kellas, *Scottish Political System*, p. 27.

additional complication in the shape of the emergent Scottish National Party (SNP). The nationalists were not a significant force in the early 1960s – the historian Iain Hutchison describes them at this time as ‘little more than an engagingly eccentric fringe party with few serious electoral pretensions’.¹⁰⁰ But this changed in 1967, when the SNP took the previously safe Labour seat of Hamilton in a by-election, a result which political commentators Murray Stewart Leith and Daniel Soule see as having fundamentally altered the Scottish political landscape.¹⁰¹ George Pottinger, the leading civil servant at the SDD, claimed that ‘nothing had a more cataclysmic effect on Scottish politics in the 1960s.’¹⁰² The revitalised SNP surged again in 1973 when it took Govan from Labour in a by-election, and won eight seats in the General Election the following year.¹⁰³ David Torrance identifies the nationalist threat as the prime mover behind Scottish Secretary Willie Ross’ drive to secure extra resource for Scotland during the Labour administrations of the 1960s, and devolution remained a ‘thorny issue’ facing all political parties in Scotland throughout this period.¹⁰⁴

Prior to 1974, local government in Scotland was organised into 33 counties as the principal administrative bodies for much of the countryside, with district bodies with limited powers that included public open space. There were also four ‘Counties of Cities’ responsible for Glasgow, Edinburgh, Aberdeen and Dundee respectively, while other urban areas were classified either as ‘large burghs’, with considerable autonomy, or as smaller burghs (some very small indeed) which were largely subservient to counties on all but local matters. All local authorities were answerable to the Scottish

¹⁰⁰ I.G.C. Hutchison, *Scottish Politics in the Twentieth Century* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2001), p. 119.

¹⁰¹ Murray Stewart Leith and Daniel Soule, *Political Discourse and National Identity in Scotland* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2011), p. 31.

¹⁰² G. Pottinger, *The Secretaries of State for Scotland, 1926-1976* (Edinburgh: Scottish Academic Press), p. 174.

¹⁰³ Harvie, *No Gods*, p. 160.

¹⁰⁴ David Torrance, *We in Scotland: Thatcherism in a Cold Climate* (Edinburgh: Birlinn, 2009), pp. 14, 107.

Office through the SDD, but David Milne (a senior Scottish Office official) indicates that this oversight was often exercised through informal relationships rather than formal direction, and describes a pattern of regular liaison between Scottish Office officials and (for example) local planners.¹⁰⁵

The widening of council responsibilities through post-war legislation – especially in planning - created a challenge for this system: finding councillors and staff of sufficient calibre. As councillors' duties became more onerous, increasing reliance was placed on salaried officers, who proved difficult to recruit when all the major authorities had similar vacancies.¹⁰⁶ In these circumstances, some authorities were inevitably more professionally capable than others. Frank Tindall, Senior Planning Officer at East Lothian County Council, recalled that at the time of his appointment in 1950, there were only 18 qualified town planners working in Scotland, most of whom worked at the Scottish Office.¹⁰⁷ Milne also recognised this weakness, which for him was evidenced by the inability of a third of local authorities to prepare and submit their mandatory development plans on time.¹⁰⁸ Sheail noted that the Scottish Office had concluded that, were national parks to be adopted in Scotland, they would have to be run more centrally than in England; Scotland's local authorities, and their finances, were not up to the job.¹⁰⁹ Local authorities could also be reluctant to look at issues strategically, seeing need only in terms of their own ratepayers, and slow to embrace change. Two

¹⁰⁵ David Milne, *The Scottish Office: And Other Scottish Government Departments* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1957), pp. 31, 123.

¹⁰⁶ W.H. Marwick, *Scottish Local Government* (London ; New York: Gollancz/Fabian Society, 1950), p. 23.

¹⁰⁷ Frank Tindall, *Memoirs and Confessions of a County Planning Officer* (Pathhead: Pantile Press, 1998), p. 1.

¹⁰⁸ Milne, *Scottish Office*, p. 125.

¹⁰⁹ Sheail, 'The National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949', p. 9.

authorities, for example, failed to action necessary house-building in response to large-scale industrial investment in their localities.¹¹⁰

These weaknesses prompted the Wheatley Commission in 1969 to recommend reform along regional lines, implemented in 1975, when the counties, cities, burghs, and districts were abolished and replaced with nine regional authorities and 53 district councils within these regions.¹¹¹ The SDD expected the regions to provide facilities of more than local significance, or to assist in provision where districts lacked capacity.¹¹² Responsibilities were allocated to both tiers of government, but leisure and recreation were left in abeyance with both tiers of authority having powers in this area, an arrangement which Arthur Oldham, Glasgow's Director of Parks and Recreation, described as 'complete limbo...a disturbing vagueness of responsibility'.¹¹³

Fry characterises local government reorganisation as ineffective, creating remote and expensive new authorities that failed to capture public acceptance, and which increasingly became dominated by the SDD.¹¹⁴ This thesis however indicates that reorganisation had a galvanising effect on strategic provision for recreation, in that the new authorities were able to take a much less parochial and more strategic outlook, and could meet the recreational needs of their urban ratepayers within their own rural

¹¹⁰ Kellas, *The Scottish Political System*, pp. 166, 167.

¹¹¹ PP: Cmnd. 4150: *Local Government in Scotland: Report of the Royal Commission 1966-69* (HMSO, London, 1969)

¹¹² Scottish Development Department, *The New Scottish Local Authorities: Organisation and Management Structure* (Edinburgh: HMSO, 1973), pp. 47–49.

¹¹³ S. A. Oldham, 'The Management of the Amenity Services – now and after 1975' in *Management of the Amenity Services after 1975* (unpublished IPRA Scotland conference report, Renfrew, November 1972), pp. 10-12 (p. 10).

¹¹⁴ Fry, *Patronage and Principle*, p. 234.

hinterlands. Despite Oldham's contemporary reservations, and others' retrospective criticism, reorganisation enabled more effective delivery at the strategic level.

Conclusion

Nine separate, but interlocking, factors have been identified in this chapter with implications for the recreation policy that developed in the second half of the 1960s: housing, population redistribution, economic change, tourism, access, recreation, countryside land use, the nature and calibre of governance, and the nationalist threat. Scottish housing policy created large communities with little or no personal open space, and which were heavily dependent on public transport. The New Towns also demanded recreational provision as part of their promise of a better quality of life; as blank pages in green countryside settings they presented an opportunity for a better-integrated approach linking urban green space with the surrounding countryside.¹¹⁵ Demographic change, and the need to address a massive redistribution of population, created its own pressure in terms of demanding local provision that recognised the rapid changes in local populations and the recreational pressures they presented. A strategic approach, addressing the needs of new population centres through planning policy, might help to mitigate the recreational challenges faced by these residents.

Meanwhile, economic policy had left large areas of post-industrial central Scotland derelict, unless they were sufficiently visually obtrusive or embarrassing to qualify for 'facelifting'. Recreation offered at least a partial solution here too: the creation of

¹¹⁵ Cowling, *An Essay for Today*, p. 2.

natural or semi-natural open space could make these areas less demoralising for local residents and more attractive to would-be investors and employers. And recreation was also increasingly being seen as an element in promoting tourism opportunity, not least at Aviemore where skiing had extended the tourist season. On the other hand, failure to plan adequately for recreation was causing problems at iconic visitor locations such as Loch Lomond and Cairn Gorm, generating pressure for solutions that would protect natural beauty and manage the impact of people, cars and caravans. Recreation was thus a double-edged sword, offering mitigation of entrenched economic problems but also posing a threat to the country's greatest recreational asset, its scenery.

Local authorities – and especially rural ones – were challenged by their low levels of resource, the limited capacity of their elected members and officers, and their parochialist outlook. They were also often dominated by, and deferred to, their local gentry, who were often the gatekeepers of access and the operators of rural industries. Nationalism represented a threat to the traditional order of things, demanding a relocation of sources of power and authority, while also prompting political intervention to improve Scotland's resource allocation. Each of these factors, and their extrapolation beyond the 1970s, would prove fundamental in the development of a policy for countryside recreation in Scotland, either in their role in helping to shape that policy, or, less helpfully, by being ignored in that process.

This analysis also shows just how different Scotland was from England in this period, and reinforces the issue of distinctiveness and the need to consider Scotland independently of its larger neighbour. There were strong similarities, of course: New Towns and the issues of recreation provision arose in both jurisdictions, and the

economic problems facing Scotland were shared by industrial areas in northern and midland England and in south Wales. Conflict between productive land use and would-be recreationalists was not unique to Scotland, nor were mutually incompatible forms of recreation. High-rise housing was a solution on both sides of the border, and contemporary accounts describe the problems caused by concentrations of recreationalists in cars converging on local beauty spots; as Brotherton indicates, Cheddar Gorge could be as problematic as Loch Lomond was.¹¹⁶ Scotland's distinctiveness in this period, though, is seen in the scale, and the concentration, of the problems, both geographically and socio-economically, the lower economic capacity of many Scots, and the extent to which the population was redistributed by post-war housing development, with inevitable consequences for any spatially-based service provision. It is also seen in the relative weakness of local government, with smaller and less well-resourced local councils unable or unwilling to align urban needs with rurally-located solutions, and a nationalist threat that challenged political certainties. An effective recreation policy would need to take due account of several diverse factors that distinguished Scotland in this period.

¹¹⁶ D I Brotherton, 'Development and Management of Country Parks in England and Wales', *Biological Conservation*, 7 (1975), 171–84 (p. 174).

Chapter 3: Country Parks: The Origins of the Concept

'We thank thee, Lord, that in thy grace
Thou hast brought us to this place.
And now, dear Lord, we humbly pray,
Thou wilt keep all others away.'

C. B. Wurster, The Urban Octopus, 1962¹

Introduction

This chapter explores the emergence of the concept of the country park, a policy that set aside specific areas of countryside formally designated for high-intensity recreation. The background to this policy was a perception of excessive and inappropriate recreational visiting of the countryside, and the chapter will explore the nature of this phenomenon, and how concern over its impact grew from its appearance early in the twentieth century through to 1965, when a commitment was made to act on the issue. It will also examine the positions taken by different countryside interests, and the extent to which concern around countryside recreation was justified.

Country parks emerged initially as a potential dimension of a policy on national parks, supposedly settled in 1949, when legislation was passed to designate national parks in England & Wales, though not in Scotland. The legislation was a significant step, but its failure to deal adequately with recreation, and the growth of that challenge in

¹ Cited in R. Aitken, 'A Recreationist's Viewpoint', in J. Tivy and G. Dickinson (eds.), 'Land Resources for Recreation in Scotland: Report on Symposium Held in St Andrews' (Unpublished conference report, 1976), pp. 62–64 (p.64). Catherine Bauer Wurster (1905–64) was an academic, author and activist specialising in planning and environmental design. She played a significant role in the development of housing policy in the United States in the 1930s and 1940s.

the 1950s and 1960s, meant that the debate then entered a new phase. The 1949 Act therefore represents a convenient watershed, and the chapter is structured accordingly, separating the more distant, but nonetheless formative, pre-war discussions from the more urgent consideration of the 1960s.

The chapter aims to clarify the evolution of recreation policy generally, and the country park specifically, in the Scottish setting. Therefore, the history of the national park movement *per se* will not be explored in detail, except insofar as it relates to Scotland and/or the country park. Similarly, as issues are raised by the more general national debate, they will be examined in relation to Scotland, and Scottish perspectives. However, it is impossible to view Scotland in isolation through this process, and the chapter therefore gives due consideration to the evolution of the policy nationally, first as part of the early national parks debate and later as a response to specific recreational problems, primarily identified in an English context but recognised, at least in some quarters, as problems shared by Scotland. Particular attention will be given to two influential contributions: a report on leisure which caused considerable anxiety through its apocalyptic forecasts, and a series of national conferences on the countryside. These will be appraised not only in themselves, but also in relation to their applicability to, and recognition of, the circumstances of Scotland. As the introduction notes, the policy outcome was described by the Secretary of State for Scotland as ‘designed for Scotland’, and it should therefore be possible to see aspects of the discussion that directly reflect the Scottish context and circumstances.²

² PP: House of Commons, Standing Committees, Official Report Session 1966-67, Vol XII, p. 8: speech by J. Dickson Mabon, Secretary of State for Scotland, Scottish Grand Committee, 18th April 1967.

Policy and proposals up to 1949

Although the two designations are quite distinct, and mean very different things, the nascence of the country park is inextricably linked to that of the national park in the UK, having originated within discussion of the possibility of national parks in Britain. Britain created its first national parks through the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act of 1949; prior to this, the focus of discussion was on national parks as a solution to the recreational needs of the nation, but thereafter, and when the national parks proved ineffective in dealing with outdoor recreation, emphasis switched to a different type of provision: the country park.

Britain was relatively late in setting up national parks. The USA was first, with Yellowstone in 1872, and was followed by Australia, Canada and New Zealand before the end of the nineteenth century. National parks arrived in Europe in the early twentieth century, beginning in Sweden in 1909; Switzerland and Spain also had national parks prior to the end of the First World War.³ The similarity of nomenclature, however, conceals a variety of underlying rationales: the early American parks were created largely as a defence against uncontrolled development and tourism, while the first Canadian park, in contrast, was an attempt to promote tourism in a remote, highly scenic, area.⁴ Australia's first national park was established specifically for countryside recreation; its counterpart in New Zealand, however, was designated to protect Maori tribal lands from exploitation.⁵ Sweden's first national park was aimed

³ John Sheail, *Nature's Spectacle: The World's First National Parks* (Abingdon: Earthscan, 2010), p. 49.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 49.

⁵ Royal National Park Environmental Education Centre: *History of the Park* <http://www.royalnatpk-e.schools.nsw.edu.au/royal-national-park-eec/history-of-the-park> [accessed 13 June 2017]; *Walks in and Around Tongariro National Park* (New Zealand Department of Conservation, 2015): <http://www.doc.govt.nz/Documents/parks-and-recreation/tracks-and-walks/tongariro-taupo/walks-around-tnp.pdf> [accessed 13 June 2017]

at protecting biodiversity and promoting scientific study, while Italy's was created to restrict poaching in an area used for elitist hunting.⁶ So although national parks today occupy common ground as regards conservation, recreation, and heritage protection, their original purposes are more diverse. What they share is that, for the most part, national parks around the world are in state ownership or control, and are largely wild or wilderness environments where activities, and conflicts between different land uses, are managed and resolved centrally.

This is emphatically not the case in Britain. National parks in the UK are substantially (though not exclusively) in private ownership, and although they include inhospitable and unproductive land, much of their landscape is used for production, for field sports, or for statutory purposes such as water catchment or military training.⁷ The land is managed accordingly, with restrictions on access to prevent damage or disturbance to livestock, crops, water, game, and nature reserves. So, although the British national parks provided space for recreation, and were at least partly selected for this purpose, their status was compromised from the very beginning by competing issues of private ownership, access restrictions, and conservation priorities. Designation has not, for example, prevented the use of national park land for potash mining, power station construction, or the development of an oil terminal.⁸

⁶ A. Dahlberg, R. Rohde and K. Sandell, 'National Parks and Environmental Justice: Comparing Access Rights and Ideological Legacies in Three Countries', *Conservation and Society*, 8.3 (2010), 209-24 (p. 215).; Gran Paradiso National Park (Valle d'Aosta Tourism, no date) <http://www.lovevda.it/en/nature/gran-paradiso-national-park> [accessed 13 June 2017]

⁷ Ann MacEwen and Malcolm MacEwen, *National Parks: Conservation or Cosmetics?* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1982), p. 11.

⁸ At Boulby (North York Moors), Trawsfynydd (Snowdonia) and Milford Haven (Pembrokeshire Coast) respectively; there are several other examples.

The UK's country parks, in contrast, are unique as a landscape designation. Although the terminology is used elsewhere in the world, it does not signify the high-intensity, recreation-focussed provision that was intended in Britain; and although other countries have provided rural areas for high-intensity recreation, these do not generally carry formal designation.⁹ The term 'country park' was first used by the Minister for Land and Natural Resources, Fred Willey, in a speech at the 'Countryside in 1970' conference in 1965, but the concept of land dedicated to recreation goes back much further than this, to 1929 and the Addison Committee, set up to examine the possibility of national parks in the UK.¹⁰

This committee was convened to investigate both the feasibility of national parks and the potential for improving facilities for countryside recreation.¹¹ It took evidence, among others, from Patrick Abercrombie, whose secretaryship of the newly formed Council for the Protection of Rural England (CPRE) gave the preservation movement an influential voice in these early discussions; he has been described by Raphael Samuel as 'by a long way the most influential of the environmental campaigners'.¹² Abercrombie proposed a hierarchical system of designation which would have addressed the land-use conflicts inherent in the national park idea (conservation, recreation, production) by establishing a regime of different types of space designated for different primary purposes and for distinct groups of user, a proposal which found

⁹ Hong Kong, for example, has country parks, but they are larger and more natural and unplanned landscapes than those in the UK.

¹⁰ 'The Countryside in 1970', *Proceedings 1965*, p. 103. Fred Willey (1910-87) was a barrister, and Labour MP for Sunderland for nearly forty years. He served as Land and Natural Resources Minister in the Wilson administration from 1965 to 1967.

¹¹ J. Mair and J. Delafons, 'The Policy Origins of Britain's National Parks: The Addison Committee 1929-31', *Planning Perspectives*, 16.3 (2001), 293-309 (p. 294).

¹² Raphael Samuel, *Theatres of Memory Vol. 1: Past and Present in Contemporary Culture* (London: Verso, 1994), p. 229.

later echo in CCS' *Park System for Scotland* of 1974.¹³ Addison also heard from the National Trust, which expressed its concern over the increased mobility being conferred on the population through car ownership, a position echoed in evidence from the Town Planning Institute.¹⁴

Addison's recommendations, published in 1931, foreshadowed the countryside legislation of the 1960s remarkably closely; they included designation of national parks as a means of protecting scenic value and landscape character, as well as the creation of countryside authorities in both England & Wales and Scotland, with responsibility for the designated areas.¹⁵ The committee acknowledged the potential incompatibility between recreational access, ecological protection and landscape conservation, and proposed the creation of 'regional reserves', close to population centres, as recreation areas that might reduce impact on the more fragile national park landscapes.¹⁶ These spaces, devoted primarily to outdoor recreation and accessible to larger populations, sound remarkably like country parks; they attracted support from the environmental pioneer George Stapledon, and recognised the difficulty of accommodating the idea of intensive recreation within the national parks themselves.¹⁷

The committee's work was abandoned when the MacDonald administration fell in 1931, but its report, which recommended the national park in principle and suggested some

¹³ Mair and Delafons, 'Policy Origins', p. 298; CCS, *A Park System for Scotland* (Perth: Countryside Commission for Scotland, 1974). This is considered further in a subsequent chapter.

¹⁴ Mair and Delafons, 'Policy Origins', pp. 297-298.

¹⁵ MacEwen and MacEwen, *National Parks : Conservation or Cosmetics?*, p. 292.

¹⁶ John Sheail, *Nature in Trust: The History of Nature Conservation in Britain* (Glasgow: Blackie, 1976), pp. 74-5; Mair and Delafons, 'Policy Origins', p. 300.

¹⁷ George Stapledon, *The Land Now and Tomorrow* (London: Faber & Faber, 1935), cited by C. G. Hughes 'Muirshiel Country Park: A case Study in Recreational Provision' (Unpublished diploma dissertation, Univ. of Glasgow, 1972). Sir George Stapledon (1882-1960) was an early environmental scientist who worked extensively on grassland and crop development, and had considerable influence on thinking about agriculture. He was an ardent supporter of national parks, and also aligned himself closely with radical groups such as Rolf Gardiner's Springhead Trust and the Rural Reconstruction Association.

locations, became the focus of an ongoing lobby for the creation of national parks.¹⁸ It had pioneered an explicit connection between landscape designation and recreation, had identified the problems inherent in competing land use, and had drawn attention to the relationship between the motor vehicle and the pressure on recreational space in the countryside. It had additionally demonstrated, in its conclusions, the irreconcilability of intensive recreational provision with landscapes already in extensive use for production. All would continue to be important, both in the national park story up to 1949, and in the further debate that took place in the 1960s.¹⁹

Addison's remit covered Scotland, but his perspective was that Scotland combined a generally lower population density outside the central belt with fewer difficulties over access. The committee therefore made no recommendations as to national parks in Scotland, and instead proposed an approach based on access agreements and the use of forestry land.²⁰ This too anticipated what was to come: Scotland was not included in national parks legislation in 1949, but the FC had already begun designating forest parks as recreational areas in its Scottish plantations from 1935.²¹

There had nevertheless been pressure for action on Scotland, from as early as 1884 when James Bryce introduced an Access to Mountains (Scotland) Bill; this failed, as did several further attempts to legislate for rights of access to open country in Scotland, primarily as a result of opposition from the field sports lobby, but also because of doubts on the part of ramblers about disrupting existing informal understandings over

¹⁸ MacEwen and MacEwen, *Greenprints*, p. 5.

¹⁹ Cherry, *Environmental Planning*, p. 126.

²⁰ Mair and Delafons, 'Policy Origins', p. 303.

²¹ Cherry, *Environmental Planning*, p. 67.

access.²² In 1909, a proposal emerged to establish a national park, aimed at conserving scenery and wildlife, on Jura or Rùm, and a few years later, the philanthropist Andrew Carnegie was approached for financial support to set up a national park in Glen Clova.²³ Neither idea progressed, but Scottish national parks continued to have advocates, and the idea was championed by the Association for the Protection of Rural Scotland (APRS), which set up a National Parks Committee in 1934 to keep the issue in the public eye.²⁴

In the meantime, though, substantial progress was being made on undesignated recreational provision in the Scottish countryside. The city of Glasgow gained much recreational open space through philanthropy, securing Cathkin Braes in 1886 and Rouken Glen in 1906; both sites were at that time outside the city boundary and were bequeathed specifically for recreation.²⁵ The city was also gifted the extensive Ardgoil estate in Argyll, 40 miles from the city, again explicitly for recreation (in which respect it proved popular, in spite of its distance and remoteness) and as a forestry resource; the Corporation ran occasional steamer trips for mothers and children from slum areas to allow them to experience the countryside.²⁶ Glasgow was also prepared to back

²² *Ibid.*, p. 16. James Bryce (1838-1922), later Viscount Bryce, was a barrister and Liberal politician with an active interest in mountaineering. He was MP for South Aberdeen for over 20 years and served as Ambassador to the USA. He wrote influential reports on atrocities carried out during and after the First World War, and worked at the International Court in The Hague.

²³ John Sheail, 'The Concept of National Parks in Great Britain, 1900-1950', *Trans. Inst. British Geographers*, 66 (1975), 41-56 (pp. 41-42). Andrew Carnegie (1835-1919) was an industrialist and philanthropist from Dunfermline, who rose from relative hardship to make a fortune in steel, which he subsequently devoted to the public realm, especially the provision of libraries and the promotion of education. He is thought to have given away (in 2015 figures) some \$77 billion. Several buildings, and the Carnegie Trust, commemorate his memory. Carnegie declined this invitation.

²⁴ Ferguson, 'National Parks for Scotland', p. 36. The APRS was an equivalent body to CPRE, though much smaller and less influential.

²⁵ Ordnance Survey 6-inch map, 1900, consulted at <<http://www.gb1900.org/>>, [accessed 21 June 2017]; Glasgow Corporation, *Greater Glasgow* (Glasgow: Hector Munro, 1914), pp. 43, 130-31.

²⁶ Glasgow Corporation, *Municipal Glasgow: Its Evolution and Enterprises* (Glasgow: Robert Gibson, 1914), pp. 183-84.

this approach financially: in 1915, the Corporation bought 200 acres at Balloch, well outside the city boundary, to create a public park that would facilitate recreational access for Glaswegians to Loch Lomond.²⁷



Figure 3.1: Rouken Glen Park, acquired by Glasgow Corporation in 1906 (Author's collection)

Glasgow was the most proactive local authority in this respect, but it was not alone. The Drumpellier estate was gifted to the Burgh of Coatbridge in 1919, while Edinburgh purchased land for a park at Hillend, outside the city boundary, in 1924. Dundee acquired the Camperdown estate for recreation in 1946, and Fife County Council reorganised former hospital land at Craigtoun in 1947 as a public park. Renfrewshire acquired the Muirshiel estate in 1952, while the Cumbernauld Development Corporation acquired land at Glen Cryan in the 1960s to provide countryside footpaths

²⁷ Glasgow: Mitchell Library: Municipal Archives C2/1(15)1: Report to Corporation by James Whitton on acquisition of Balloch estate, 15 January 1916.

for the New Town.²⁸ Additionally, areas that remained in private hands were made freely available for recreation, including the Pollok estate in Glasgow, opened for recreation in 1911, Gleniffer Braes (Paisley), which had been open access land since the nineteenth century, and Monikie reservoir (near Dundee), which was evidently already popular for recreation in 1890, when it was celebrated in verse by William McGonagall.²⁹ All these are now country parks, but were in recreational use long before the label became attached.³⁰

Nor were councils the only Scottish agencies at work in this field. The NTS opened negotiation to purchase Glencoe in 1935, and acquired the adjacent estate of Dalness in 1937.³¹ The Glencoe purchase was a response to the threat of commercialisation should the land be acquired privately, but the prominence of the Scottish Mountaineering Club in both transactions confirms that these were not merely defensive measures to protect the landscape but also actively secured availability for outdoor pursuits – and in areas that would be hard to access without private transport.³²

As early as 1914, both Rouken Glen and Cathkin Braes were promoted by their new owners as accessible by car.³³ Countryside motoring grew further in popularity after the First World War, encouraged by publications such as motoring features in *Country*

²⁸ Wells, R.G., 'Muirshiel Country Park' (Unpublished MSc thesis, University College London, 1975), p. 9; Edinburgh: National Records of Scotland: Scottish Development Department Archive DD12/566, Minutes of CCS Planning and Research Committee, 3 February 1969.

²⁹ W. McGonagall: *Beautiful Monikie* (1890); <http://www.mcgonagall-online.org.uk/gems/beautiful-monikie> [Accessed 21 June 2017]. McGonagall (1825-1902), who came from Dundee, was a prolific but unsuccessful poet, widely considered to have been one of the worst in the English language. He died in penury, but his poems are still in print.

³⁰ Details of these various acquisitions and arrangements are provided in the appendix.

³¹ Robert Hurd, *Scotland Under Trust* (London: A. & C. Black, 1939), p. 1.

³² *Ibid.*, pp 2, 8-9.

³³ Glasgow Corporation, *Greater Glasgow*, pp. 43, 130–31.

Life, and the *Shell Guides*, portraying a rural idyll in which, paradoxically, no parked cars or traffic congestion were apparent.³⁴ There were also several popular books on this theme, not least H.V. Morton's best-selling *In Search of England* (1927), which described a motoring tour of the country, and which was succeeded in 1929 by a companion volume for Scotland.³⁵

The visiting motorist may have become more familiar, but was not always welcomed in the villages. The author Robert Graves noted that rural people disliked the noise, smell, intrusion and bad manners of the interlopers, and even encouraged their children to throw things at them as they passed.³⁶ And the villagers had some support among those seeking to protect countryside interests and traditional values. The Sussex novelist Sheila Kaye-Smith, for example, expressed dismay in 1938 that beauty spots were being irretrievably damaged by visitors, and feared that Kent and Sussex would be overrun by cars: 'The English countryside is beautiful ... it seems an unnecessary irony that [man] should destroy his own work out of sheer enthusiasm for it.'³⁷ The historian G. M. Trevelyan asserted that 'the development of motor traction turns every "beauty spot" into an "eligible building site"', as facilities were developed to cater for the motorists.³⁸ Other preservationists had plenty to say about motoring in the countryside, Cyril Joad, for example, declaring: 'above all and most hated of all,

³⁴ S. O'Connell, *The Car and British Society: Class, Gender and Motoring 1896 - 1939* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1998), pp. 155–56.

³⁵ Peter Thorold, *The Motoring Age: The Automobile and Britain 1896-1939* (London: Profile, 2003), p. 91. The volumes in question are H. V. Morton, *In Search of England* (London: Methuen, 1927) and *In Search of Scotland* (London: Methuen, 1930).

³⁶ Robert Graves and Alan Hodge, *The Long Weekend : A Social History of Great Britain, 1918-1939* (London: Cardinal, 1991), p. 183.

³⁷ S. Kaye-Smith, 'Laughter in the South East', in C. Williams Ellis (ed.), *Britain and the Beast* (London: Dent, 1938), 32-43 (p. 36).

³⁸ G. M. Trevelyan, 'Amenities and the State', in C. Williams Ellis (ed.) *Britain and the Beast* (London: Dent, 1938), 183-86 (p.183).

there are the motorists.³⁹ Motoring historian Sean O’Connell concludes that disquiet about the impact of the car was most voiced in two areas – road safety, and the countryside.⁴⁰

To the present-day mindset, where motor vehicles are ubiquitous, these anxieties seem disproportionate; in 1920, just 190,000 cars were licensed for use in the UK, and fewer than one in forty households owned one.⁴¹ Ownership expanded rapidly, however, during the 1920s through higher disposable incomes and again, in the 1930s, as mass production widened affordability.⁴² By 1939, there were 2 million cars on Britain’s roads, and the pressure this created was obvious, as road quality, traffic management and parking provision all failed to keep pace with volumes.⁴³ Motoring, as Phil MacNaghten and John Urry note, had moved from being an unfamiliar technology to a ‘typical and apparently “natural” way of experiencing landscape.’⁴⁴

But traffic volumes were only one dimension of the problem; the preservationists were equally exercised by the behaviour of the cars’ occupants. Joad characterised this as ‘a liability and a blight’, highlighting several issues including littering, damage to livestock and plant life, noise, nudity and dancing: ‘fat girls in shorts, youths in gaudy ties and plus-fours’ were greatly deprecated.⁴⁵ The farming journalist Arthur Street

³⁹ C.E.M. Joad, ‘The People’s Claim’, in C. Williams Ellis (ed.) *Britain and the Beast* (London: Dent, 1938), 64–85 (p. 73). Cyril Joad (1891-1953) was a writer and broadcaster who campaigned against uncontrolled development in the countryside. A pacifist, he briefly joined Oswald Mosley’s New Party, flirted with naturism, and was a keen fox-hunter. He became a radio celebrity through his participation in the Brains Trust, broadcast on the BBC Home Service, but a fare-dodging scandal ended his career.

⁴⁰ O’Connell, *The Car*, p. 219.

⁴¹ D. Gutzke and M.J. Law, *The Roadhouse Comes to Britain: Drinking, Driving and Dancing, 1925-1955* (London: Bloomsbury, 2017), p. 4. The authors suggest that ownership was below 2.5% of residents, but this does not reconcile with official population figures for the time.

⁴² Graves and Hodge, *Long Weekend*, p. 182.

⁴³ T. Barker and D. Gerhold, *The Rise and Rise of Road Transport, 1700 -1990* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1993), p. 95; Thorold, *The Motoring Age*, p. 258.

⁴⁴ Phil MacNaghten and John Urry, *Contested Natures*, (London: Sage, 1998), p. 209.

⁴⁵ Joad, ‘The People’s Claim’, p. 73.

argued that farmers had been the agents of countryside preservation, and deplored the townspeople's 'bad manners' in visiting the countryside without either payment or permission, accusing them of destroying it through noise, untidiness, trespass and (unspecified) 'noxious habits'.⁴⁶ But this was not a new phenomenon; as Paul Readman notes in discussing access to Thames-side countryside in Middlesex, there had been problems in the nineteenth century too over dress, language, dogs and damage to flora and fauna.⁴⁷ Joad's proposed solution was not prevention, but rather education; townspeople should be welcomed into the countryside, indeed they had a right to enjoy it, but only on agreed terms. Primarily, they needed to be educated: 'the townsman [*sic*] by and large, does not as yet know how to behave in the country, or to commune with beauty without destroying it.'⁴⁸ This has echoes of Matless' discussion of 'right' and 'wrong' reasons for visiting the countryside, and of promoting appropriate behaviour.⁴⁹ Joad advocated lessons in countryside behaviour (children, he suggested, might benefit from taking an exam in countryside manners), with the BBC enlisted to provide relevant instruction, and with wardens employed in enforcement.⁵⁰ These proposals illustrate Readman's view that preservation and access were allies – the movement's goal was not to prevent access but rather to assert rights of common ownership – but also the tendency of the conservationists to assert dogma of control

⁴⁶ A.G.Street, 'The Countryman's View', in C. Williams Ellis (ed.), *Britain and the Beast* (London: Dent, 1938), 122-132 (p.124).

⁴⁷ Paul Readman, *Storied Ground: Landscape and the Shaping of English National Identity* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2018), p. 281.

⁴⁸ Joad, 'The People's Claim', pp. 71, 74

⁴⁹ Matless, *Landscape and Englishness*, p. 10.

⁵⁰ Joad, 'The People's Claim', p. 80

and civilisation.⁵¹ Peter Mandler points out that several early conservation purists were adherents of Oswald Mosley's New Party.⁵²

The onset of war naturally changed both perspectives and priorities, but nevertheless significant progress was made on recreation policy during the war years. Gordon Cherry attributed this partly to the increased momentum that had built up behind the access lobby during the 1930s, but also detected a political perception that the countryside question might be utilised to restore national morale once hostilities had ended.⁵³ The Saltire Society foresaw a similar post-war opportunity in Scotland, to offset an inheritance of cultural decline and make the country a better place in which to live.⁵⁴ In England & Wales, John Dower was commissioned to survey a number of areas as possible national parks, and this led to legislation in 1949 establishing national parks south of the border.⁵⁵ His report expressed the view that access to the countryside should be secured for all, especially the young, and not just for the privileged; the Hobhouse Report of 1947, which explored implementation of his recommendations, sought to confer 'a precious gift of greater rights and privileges...an

⁵¹ Readman, *Storied Ground*, pp. 281-284

⁵² Peter Mandler, 'Politics and the English Landscape since the First World War', *Huntington Library Quarterly*, 55 (1992), 459-76 (pp. 465-66).

⁵³ Gordon E. Cherry and A. Rogers, *Rural Change and Planning: England and Wales in the Twentieth Century* (London: Spon, 1996), p. 125; Cherry, *Environmental Planning*, p. 25.

⁵⁴ Edinburgh: National Library of Scotland: Saltire Society Archive ACC9393/341: 'Scotland Tomorrow', Report on Saltire Society conference, 15 February 1941, p. 3.

⁵⁵ Cherry, *Environmental Planning*, pp. 34-37. John Dower (1900-1947) was an architect who spent much of his time working as a volunteer for CPRE and Friends of the Lake District, a commitment which secured him a role with the Standing Committee on National Parks. He wrote influential pamphlets and orchestrated a press campaign in favour of national parks before the war. After a short period of war service, Dower was appointed as a temporary civil servant to investigate practicalities of delivering national parks. He was described his obituary as combining the abilities of the administrator, architect and preservationist. W. Holford, Obituary, *J. of the Royal Institute of British Architects* 55 (1948) 38-9.

effective contribution to the health and well-being of the nation'.⁵⁶ The priorities were clearly access, rather than agriculture; inclusivity rather than exclusivity.

In Scotland, progress was slower, but an APRS conference in 1942 led to the creation of a Scottish Council for National Parks, which put pressure on the Scottish Office to undertake a similar survey, and a committee, under Sir Douglas Ramsay, was appointed in 1944 to explore possibilities.⁵⁷ Ramsay set selection criteria linked to conservation, recreation and accessibility, and identified nine areas, mostly in the highlands, of which five were commended for more thorough consideration.⁵⁸ His committee also made it clear that it expected these to be under public control, and largely in outright public ownership.⁵⁹ This was always going to be difficult to secure in Scotland, where a powerful and influential landowning lobby could rally strong support to counter the views of relatively weak amenity and access groups, and in the end, Scotland was omitted from the national park legislation.

Several theories have been expressed over the failure to secure national parks for Scotland. Mackay has suggested that the Secretary of State, Arthur Woodburn, deliberately delayed a difficult decision until it was too late to act.⁶⁰ In fairness to Woodburn, though, he and his officials seem to have wished to see how well the English proposals worked in practice before inviting the inevitable conflict that would

⁵⁶ PP. Cmnd. 6628: John Dower, *National Parks in England and Wales* (London: HMSO, 1945) cited by Curry, *Countryside Recreation*, p. 112; Cmnd. 7121: Sir Arthur Hobhouse, *Report of the National Parks Committee (England and Wales)* (London: HMSO, 1947), cited by Cherry, *Environmental Planning*, p. 63.

⁵⁷ Edinburgh: National Records of Scotland: Scottish Development Department Archive: DD12/3011; Cherry, *Environmental Planning*, p. 73.

⁵⁸ PP: Cmnd. 6631, Douglas Ramsay, *National Parks, A Scottish Survey* (Edinburgh: HMSO, 1945), pp. 7-9.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 5.

⁶⁰ Donald Mackay, *Scotland's Rural Land Use Agencies* (Aberdeen, Scottish Cultural Press, 1995), p. 144. Arthur Woodburn (1890-1978) was Labour MP for Clackmannanshire for over 30 years, and was Secretary of State for Scotland in the Attlee administration from 1947 – 1950 (William Knox, *Scottish Labour Leaders 1918-39: A Biographical Dictionary* (Edinburgh: Mainstream, 1984), p. 288.

accompany any attempt to impose a similar regime on Scotland.⁶¹ Scottish landowners were strongly resistant to the idea of state acquisition of the land, and, with influence at the highest levels in a country where influence carried weight, they were formidable opponents. This was one of the ‘many occasions’ described by Sidaway, when the forces of reaction rallied against change in the Scottish countryside.⁶² Moreover, the small and under-resourced local authorities of highland Scotland were resistant to the complex financial and management implications of the designation of large land areas across authority boundaries. The pressure groups that were effective advocates of national parks in England were weaker north of the border, and the most influential, the NTS, was hesitant; they withdrew from the Scottish Council on National Parks in 1956.⁶³ And Ferguson points out that there was doubt among Scottish Office officials who feared the limitations that designation might create for infrastructure development, particularly future hydro-electric schemes.⁶⁴ A review in 1950 concluded that Ramsay’s proposals were too far from population centres to make any significant impact on recreation, and too dependent on local authorities with neither the resources nor the will to make them work as national parks.⁶⁵ In the end, Ramsay’s recommended areas were given ‘National Park Direction Area’ status, a fudged semi-designation which made development subject to the Secretary of State’s approval, but with no concession towards either recreation or environmental protection.

⁶¹ Edinburgh: National Records of Scotland: Scottish Development Department Archive DD12/3011: paper on National Parks for Scotland, April 1961.

⁶² Sidaway, ‘Trends in Outdoor Recreation’, p. 10.

⁶³ Edinburgh: National Records of Scotland: Scottish Development Department Archive DD12/3011: paper on National Parks for Scotland, April 1961.

⁶⁴ Ferguson, ‘National Parks for Scotland’, p. 38.

⁶⁵ Edinburgh: National Records of Scotland: Scottish Development Department Archive DD12/3011: paper on National Parks for Scotland, April 1961.

This label served, in the MacEwans' words, 'only as a buoy to mark the scene of the wreck' of the Scottish national park campaign.⁶⁶

Policy and debate after 1949

The 1949 decision to set up national parks might have been expected to settle the countryside recreation question, at least in England & Wales and at least for the foreseeable future. It was not long, though, before the issue reappeared on the national agenda, and once again the car was a prime mover. The number of cars on the road had fallen during and after the Second World War, only reaching the two million level again in 1950.⁶⁷ Thereafter, however, there was a dramatic expansion in car ownership, with numbers doubling by 1959 and trebling by 1961.⁶⁸ By 1966, 45% of British households owned a car.⁶⁹ The voices of countryside preservation and agriculture had now been joined by those of environmentalists, planners and countryside users, all worried at the damage being done both to the countryside itself and to their enjoyment of it by traffic congestion, loss of amenity, and noise. In 1958, Colin Buchanan, in the first significant analysis of the issue, described the freedom offered by motor car ownership, opening up new opportunities for healthy recreation (he characterised this as the car's 'supreme function'), but also the consequences in terms of 'widespread spoliation' of the countryside through congestion and inappropriate behaviour.⁷⁰ Sylvia Sayer protested in 1962 that 'motor vehicles

⁶⁶ MacEwen and MacEwen, *Greenprints*, p. 11.

⁶⁷ Barker and Gerhold, *The Rise and Rise of Road Transport*, p. 95.

⁶⁸ Cherry and Rogers, *Rural Change and Planning*, p. 132.

⁶⁹ D. Rubinstein and C. Speakman, *Leisure, Transport and the Countryside* (London: Fabian Society, 1969), p. 2.

⁷⁰ C. Buchanan, *Mixed Blessing: The Motor in Britain* (London: Leonard Hill, 1958), pp. 58, 67. Sir Colin Buchanan (1907-2001) was a town planner whose work on traffic and car ownership became widely read and highly influential in urban planning. His report to government in 1960 formed the basis for his most celebrated

scattered widely over open landscapes dominate and de-nature the whole scene...they impose all the associations of urban life on scenes which should be free, natural and wild.⁷¹ Two national park authorities sought new powers to allow them to plan for growth in visitor numbers that 'threaten[ed] to kill what they come to enjoy.'⁷² This line of argument echoed the preservationists' pre-war observations, and would find itself rehearsed several times in the course of the debate. Nor were the recreationalists themselves content with the situation: a Ramblers' Association booklet of 1960 drew attention to the problems being caused in national parks by 'large-scale motoring', disrupting tranquillity and creating pressure for unwanted road widening, car parks and lay-bys.⁷³

An article in 1965 brought the issue sharply into focus. Michael Dower's 'Fourth Wave' identified six socio-demographic factors shaping the growth of leisure, with potentially devastating consequences for coast and countryside: population growth, higher disposable incomes, the numbers of cars, increased access to post-16 education, the numbers of retired people, and the shortening of the working week.⁷⁴ His inspiration

work, *Traffic in Towns*, published in 1963. He served as President of CPRE and of the RTPI. (Obituary, *Daily Telegraph*, 12 October 2001)

⁷¹ Edinburgh, National Records of Scotland: Scottish Development Department DD12/2846. Note from Sir Keith Joseph, Minister of Housing and Local Government, circulated to SDD, 25 September 1964, citing Lady Sayer's address to National Parks Conference, 1962. Sir Keith Joseph (1918-94) was a barrister and Conservative MP who held several ministerial posts in the Macmillan, Heath and Thatcher governments. He was a monetarist and social conservative, and set up the Centre for Policy Studies with Margaret Thatcher after the 1974 election defeat. (Obituary, *The Guardian*, 12 December 1994). Sylvia Sayer (1904 – 2000) was an environmental campaigner and activist in Dartmoor, who served on the National Park Committee from its formation but resigned over what she considered inappropriate development. She was active against off-road parking on the moor and other industrial and environmental intrusions including military use and by-pass construction. Obituary, *The Independent*, 13 January 2000).

⁷² John Sheail, 'Leisure in the English Countryside: Policy-Making in the 1960s', *Planning Perspectives*, 16 (2001), 67-84 (p. 71).

⁷³ Ramblers' Association, *Motor Vehicles in National Parks* (London: Ramblers' Association, 1960), p. 2.

⁷⁴ M. Dower, 'Fourth Wave: The Challenge of Leisure', *Architects' Journal*, 20 January 1965, pp. 122-90.

Michael Dower was a son of John Dower, whose work had been instrumental in the securing of national parks in England & Wales in 1949. He worked for the Civic Trust, and later established the Dartington Amenity and Research Trust to undertake research into countryside recreation. He was Director-General of the Countryside Commission, co-authored the European Landscape Convention, and remains an active educator in retirement.

came from a report written in America, where the demographic changes he was concerned about were already under way; the report set out their implications in respect of recreation provision and the underlying principle of access for all as of right.⁷⁵ Relating these conclusions to the UK, Dower described how these six factors had changed in Britain since 1955, and extrapolated this data towards the year 2000, concluding that the UK population would increase by a third, reaching 70 million people, by 2000, that income would triple over this period, that the working week would shrink from 42 hours to 30 hours (increasing opportunities for outdoor leisure), and – most importantly – that the number of cars in the country would increase from the 7 million already causing considerable concern in 1965 to 30 million by the end of the century.⁷⁶ These forecasts indicated that the demand for outdoor recreation, already approaching intolerable levels in some parts of the country, would treble by the end of the century. To amplify this alarming message further, Dower deployed the language of the apocalypse – 'flood gates...beginning to open' and 'battalions of cars...pour[ing] out of the city' – and illustrated his paper with photographs of overcrowded beaches, parks and riverbanks, sprawling caravan sites, and rural traffic congestion.⁷⁷ 'The countryside', he wrote, 'is not designed for the weekend invasion.'⁷⁸

Dower's article also presented several positive examples of the use of designated recreation space, and especially highlighted the value of this approach in the American experience, referencing a solution deployed in Detroit which defined areas of countryside for specific purposes, including active recreation.⁷⁹ Like his American

⁷⁵ Laurance S. Rockefeller, *Outdoor Recreation for America: A Report to the President and to the Congress* (Washington DC: Outdoor Recreation Resources Review Commission, 1962).

⁷⁶ Dower, 'Fourth Wave', p. 123.

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 123, 161, 166.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 125.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 158-159.

forebear, he drew attention to the needs created by metropolitan areas and their need for convenient countryside with easy access.⁸⁰ He also used two emerging UK examples, at the Lea Valley and in Staffordshire, promoting the idea of designated space in a similar vein – essentially spaces modelling what became the country park.⁸¹ He urged an Abercrombie-like systematic approach to designation, with sites earmarked for high-density recreation, low-intensity recreation, nature conservation, unmanaged land and so on.⁸² Strangely, however, neither the country park nor the designation system featured in his final recommendations, which focussed on the **need** for action, rather than the form it should take; and although he recommended that public utilities and private owners should open up land and water for recreation, he was silent about local authority provision in this respect.⁸³ Moreover, although his report was written (and illustrated) to convey urgency and action, his final recommendations (like those put forward in America) urged a thorough assessment of both supply and demand for recreation, and an enhanced role for leisure in regional and local strategic planning, two approaches that would inevitably have delayed any solution.⁸⁴ Unsurprisingly, the body of his article, highlighting the inevitability of crisis and the need for specific and urgent provision, attracted a great deal more attention than his rather muted conclusions.

The idea of designated land for recreation had already been picked up by the National Parks Commission, who were urging the use of urban fringes in England & Wales for

⁸⁰ Rockefeller, *Outdoor Recreation for America*, p. 82.

⁸¹ Dower, 'Fourth Wave', pp. 162 -164.

⁸² *Ibid.*, p. 167.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, p. 189.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 189; Rockefeller, *Outdoor Recreation for America*, pp. 5-6.

this purpose.⁸⁵ But whilst other commentators shared Dower's concerns, they moved less confidently in identifying workable solutions, and echoed his recommendation of more research rather than adopting his proposals wholesale. Thomas Burton, for example, was highly aware of the lack of detailed research in this area, both as to the nature of demand and the aspirations of recreationalists.⁸⁶ He agreed that there was a need to provide for motorists, but suggested the provision of car parks, toilets and picnic facilities – an approach that sought to cater for, rather than contain, private motoring.⁸⁷ Burton also argued for better bases for forecasting.⁸⁸ The Town and Country Planning Association similarly urged an assessment of supply and demand, and for research into the detail of recreational need.⁸⁹ *Country Life* echoed the call for further research, but also called for poor-quality land to be set aside for recreation.⁹⁰ J. A. Zetter, writing for the Countryside Commission, acknowledged that the methods of forecasting were unreliable – though this did not stop him, or his employers, from holding to the prediction of a trebling of recreational demand by 2000.⁹¹ And within the government, even as it moved towards formal proposals, officials found their work

⁸⁵ Edinburgh: National Records of Scotland: Scottish Development Department Archive DD12/2846: Memo from National Parks Commission to SDD, 17 December 1964.

⁸⁶ Thomas L. Burton, 'Introduction', in T. L. Burton (ed.), *Recreation Research and Planning: A Symposium* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1970), 13–23 (pp. 13–14).

⁸⁷ Thomas L. Burton, 'Current Trends in Recreation Demands', in T. L. Burton (ed.), *Recreation Research and Planning: A Symposium* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1970), 27–43 (p. 38).

⁸⁸ Thomas L. Burton, 'The Shape of Things to Come', in T. L. Burton (ed.), *Recreation Research and Planning: A Symposium* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1970), 242–68 (p. 242).

⁸⁹ Kew: National Archives: Ministry of Land and Natural Resources Archive JH5/14: submission by Town and Country Planning Association to Ministry, October 1965.

⁹⁰ Editorial: 'Sharing the Countryside' in *Country Life*, 11 February 1965.

⁹¹ J. A. Zetter, *The Evolution of Country Park Policy* (Cheltenham: Countryside Commission, 1971), p. 4.

hindered by an absence of 'basic facts'.⁹² Nevertheless, they ignored the SDD's request for an assessment of Scottish needs before promoting a Bill in Parliament.⁹³

Others, though, accepted the anecdotal evidence of traffic congestion and crowded beauty spots as entirely conclusive: 'although no good bases exist from which to project demand, there can be no doubt that it will be heavy.'⁹⁴ Terry Coppock lamented the absence of data as especially damaging to Scotland, with its relatively high population densities and New Towns, and the consequent issues over access to recreational space, most of which was remote, and argued accordingly for more generous provision in Scotland.⁹⁵ The NTS led the way in gathering empirical evidence, collecting data on visitors to its properties as their numbers rose, placing ever greater pressure on facilities at a time when inflation was eroding the value of the endowments that paid for them.⁹⁶ Even so, not everyone accepted the inevitability of demand: Perth and Kinross County Council was defiant in resisting calls to provide for tourism and recreation at its own ratepayers' expense, its leader affirming 'I resist this absolutely... the [residents] must come first'.⁹⁷ Inverness County Council similarly refused to countenance financial support for what it regarded as a 'parasitic industry'.⁹⁸ The highland crofters took a different, but equally negative, perspective, arguing that their livelihoods should be prioritised ahead of recreational access.⁹⁹

⁹² Kew: National Archives: Ministry of Land and Natural Resources Archive JH5/14: Memo from G. Wilde to D. Cracknell, 20 August 1965.

⁹³ Edinburgh: National Records of Scotland: Scottish Development Department Archive DD12/2915: Briefing paper from A. B. Hume to Secretary of State, 19 July 1965.

⁹⁴ I. G. Simmons, *Rural Recreation in the Industrial World* (London: Edward Arnold, 1975), p. 25.

⁹⁵ Coppock, 'Leisure in Scotland: A Synoptic View', pp. 234-235.

⁹⁶ Edinburgh: National Trust for Scotland Archive: NTS 36th *Annual Report*, 1966, pp. 34-35.

⁹⁷ *Glasgow Herald*, 25 April 1964.

⁹⁸ *Inverness Courier*, 28 April 1964.

⁹⁹ Edinburgh: National Records of Scotland: Carnegie Trust Archive GD281/136/1/18: Notes on NTS Inverness conference, April 1964.

There was similarly little attention given to supply: the provision of facilities for diverse types of activity. The landscape architect Nan Fairbrother was among those arguing that this was unimportant; any countryside would do, so long as it looked the part and had effective boundaries.¹⁰⁰ This was facile, ignoring important detail. Supply needed to accommodate distinct types of activity in different forms of landscape and was a function both of the physical resource available and the cultural and demographic norms that governed how this resource would be used. It was essential to consider the capacity of recreationalists to travel, and the limits they would place on distance when accessing activities; this would help to determine where provision should be sited. But no assessment of the supply side was made ahead of the countryside legislation, and CCS sought to remedy this deficiency almost immediately after it was created, commissioning a study of existing provision, including location and the types of recreation supported.¹⁰¹ This was eminently sensible, but it would have been more useful to have this information at an earlier stage to provide clearer guidance on spending priorities, and to identify sites with the potential to host activities capable of spatial co-existence.

The absence of almost any reliable data on recreation may explain why Dower's work attracted little challenge. There was a discussion within government in April 1965 that raised serious questions about the forecasts, but these were not aired publicly, and Dower's offer of a paper on issues of supply and demand was not taken up.¹⁰²

¹⁰⁰ Nan Fairbrother, *New Lives, New Landscapes* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1972), p. 103. Nancy 'Nan' Fairbrother (1917-71) was a landscape architect and writer on land use. *New Lives, New Landscapes* won a literary award.

¹⁰¹ Edinburgh: National Records of Scotland: Countryside Commission for Scotland Archive: CCS 3/2: Minutes of meeting 14 January 1970. The study was commissioned from the Institute of Parks and Recreation Administration, but no copy of the final report seems to have survived.

¹⁰² Kew: National Archives: Ministry of Land and Natural Resources Archive JH5/14: Notes of meeting, 29 April 1965.

Research into recreation only really took off after the Countryside Commissions had been established, and with little co-ordination of methodological approach, or common standards, to facilitate comparability.¹⁰³ In a discussion on the BBC in 1966, John James, a senior government planning officer, called for both a better measurement of demand and also a better understanding of its nature.¹⁰⁴ Dower, however, in the same discussion, took the view that research would simply delay an issue on which urgent action was needed – curiously contradicting his own conclusion in ‘Fourth Wave’ a year earlier.¹⁰⁵ The first comprehensive study of recreation, which among other things uncovered the difficulty of researching such a highly diverse subject, was only published in 1969, by which time important decisions had already been taken.¹⁰⁶ The early studies often found themselves in conflict with one another, primarily due to methodological differences and inadequate sample sizes, so it was some time before reliable evidence was available to guide local planners.

There was a little early research that may have proved instructive, nevertheless. A 1964 study at Berkhamsted found that over half of families visiting the locality stayed close to, or even within, their cars; a similar study at Box Hill in Surrey in 1966 confirmed this finding, while a 1969 study at Ashdown Forest found 85% of visitors in or near their vehicles.¹⁰⁷ This phenomenon extended to Scotland, as studies in 1965

¹⁰³ D.D. Molyneux, ‘A Framework for Recreational Research’, in T. L. Burton (ed.), *Recreation Research and Planning: A Symposium* (George Allen & Unwin, 1970), 47–64 (pp. 57–60).

¹⁰⁴ Michael Dower, ‘The Future of the Countryside’, in R. Jellis (ed.), *Land and People: The Countryside for Use and Leisure* (London: BBC Publications, 1966), pp. 102–13 (p. 109).

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 113.

¹⁰⁶ Sillitoe, *Planning for Leisure* (1969).

¹⁰⁷ B. Cracknell: ‘Planning for Countryside Recreation’ in T. L. Burton (ed.), *Recreation Research and Planning: A symposium* (London, George Allen and Unwin, 1970), 127-149 (pp. 130-131). The Berkhamsted survey was carried out by J.F. Wager and published in *New Society*. E.W.M. Holdaway, ‘The Country Park: An Examination of Its Principles’ (Unpublished MSc dissertation, University of Edinburgh, 1971), p. 39, citing a survey by Furmidge, 1969.

and 1970 found.¹⁰⁸ The National Trust gave evidence to a House of Lords Committee lamenting the numbers of countryside visitors seeking leisure but 'who do not seem to know what to do with it'.¹⁰⁹ The implication was that, where provision could be made for cars, this would serve the needs of a large proportion of their occupants.

As before the war, concern about cars focussed not only on their numbers, but also on the behaviour of their occupants. One of the more strident post-war voices was Nan Fairbrother's, who centred on the damage being done to rural interests, and especially farming, through ignorance of agriculture on the part of town-based visitors: 'whether we like it or not, urban people and farms are a bad combination for the farms'.¹¹⁰ Her polemic had strong class overtones; the clash between farming and recreation had been manageable when recreation was limited to the 'nobility and gentry' whose sports respected the farmer's perspective, but not when the transgressors were people with no awareness of countryside ways.¹¹¹ She was discomfited by the erosion of class distinctiveness in a Britain where even dustmen could aspire to car ownership.¹¹² Motoring had 'lost its snob-appeal...it is going down in the world'.¹¹³ What she considered to have been a more discreet, middle-class tourism of the early inter-war period had been supplanted by a mass tourism whose interest in the scenery, she suggested, could be just as satisfactorily catered for by 'flowering cherries and thickets of rhododendrons'.¹¹⁴ This was an extreme position,

¹⁰⁸ Thomas L. Burton and Gerald P. Wibberley, *Outdoor Recreation in the British Countryside* (Wye: Wye College, 1965), p. 19; Coppock and Duffield, *Spatial Analysis*, p. 29.

¹⁰⁹ Fitton, 'Countryside Recreation: The Problems of Opportunity', p. 59.

¹¹⁰ Fairbrother, *New Lives, New Landscapes*, p. 93.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 93.

¹¹² *Ibid.*, p. 48.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 270.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 149; this somewhat acerbic observation makes it a little disconcerting to note the prominence of rhododendrons in Scottish country parks!

but she had allies in her concern over behaviour, including some Scots. Lachlan Young, the Director of Education for Perthshire, complained about adults' 'filthy social habits in the countryside'; he too saw the solution in education, and set up a 'Committee on Education in the Countryside'.¹¹⁵ The Lord Provost of Perth joined in, using his welcome address to a CCS conference in 1968 to deplore, at length, anti-social activity in the Scottish countryside.¹¹⁶ And Lord Burton of Dochfour complained that a 1964 conference had shown little understanding 'of what we [landowners] have to suffer from the tourists'.¹¹⁷

Although cars were still the main focus of attention, they were not the only troubling dimension of countryside recreation in Scotland. Caravans had existed between the wars but were still relatively scarce in 1951. By 1955, however, they accounted for 8% of all holidays in the UK, and this proportion doubled in the years up to 1968.¹¹⁸ The membership of the Caravan Club, established to support responsible caravanning and to accredit sites, increased proportionately. But the Caravan Club only accounted for around half of caravan owners, and those who made more informal arrangements for their stays often created problems of visual aesthetics, litter and hygiene.¹¹⁹ Both the government and the caravan lobby took action, the former through legislation (the Caravan Sites and Control of Development Act 1960 sought, among other things, to regulate caravan site provision) and the Caravan Club through the publication, in 1940,

¹¹⁵ Glasgow: Strathclyde University Archives: Scottish Countryside Activities Council Archive: Bruce Riddell, 'Report on Scottish Countryside Activities Council Conference' (Unpublished report, Perth, 1968), p. 3.

¹¹⁶ Glasgow: Strathclyde University Archives: Scottish Countryside Activities Council Archive: Report on CCS European Conservation Year, Perth, 1968.

¹¹⁷ Edinburgh: National Trust for Scotland Archive NTS JD/1311 C44 part II: Letter, Lord Burton to Jamie Stormonth Darling, 16 April 1964.

¹¹⁸ M. L. Owen and B.S. Duffield, *The Touring Caravan in Scotland: A Research Study* (Edinburgh: Scottish Tourist Board, 1971), p. 1.

¹¹⁹ D.C. Nicholls, 'Tourism in Scotland', p. 168; Glasgow: Scottish Countryside Activities Council Archive: Report on Touring Caravanning and Camping in Scotland (1971), p. 4.

of a Caravan Code, which all its members were required to affirm, setting out the expectations of responsible caravanning.¹²⁰

Caravans were a particular challenge in Scotland, where they accounted for a higher proportion of holidaymakers, rising to around 25% of visitors in the early 1970s.¹²¹ The Scottish Landowners Federation (SLF), for example, raised concerns over uncontrolled caravanning in the context of a discussion on visitors to Glencoe and Rannoch.¹²² A major issue was the excessive peak season demand for pitches, which led to what SCAC defined as ‘holmadic camping’, parking the caravan and/or pitching a tent in a convenient spot regardless of the presence of facilities to support an overnight stay.¹²³ SCAC saw the solution in education (inevitably) but thought that a ranger service could be deployed to enforce against holmadic camping and to offer advice and information.¹²⁴ They overlooked, however, the question of resourcing such a service across the entirety of the Scottish landscape.

Coach parties also contributed to the Scottish problem. Although more efficient than the car in conveying larger numbers of people, coaches had specific needs as regards parking space, and naturally tended to concentrate visitors at locations attractive enough to draw customers in volume. A 1964 report indicated that just over 4 million

¹²⁰ *Ex. Inf.* Richard Noyce, Curator, Caravan and Motorhome Club Collection, National Motor Museum, Beaulieu.

¹²¹ Nicholls, *Tourism in Scotland*, p. 168.

¹²² Edinburgh, National Records of Scotland: Scottish Landowners’ Federation Archive GD 325/2/198; report on discussions, 8 December 1971.

¹²³ Glasgow: Strathclyde University Archives: Scottish Countryside Activities Council Archive: *Report on Touring Caravanning and Camping in Scotland* (1971), p. 3.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 14-15.

people visited Scottish locations by coach in 1960; this had risen to over 5.7 million by 1963, and most of these visitors were of Scottish origin.¹²⁵

Alongside these challenges, the countryside had also to contend with a significant growth in outdoor sport. The Wolfenden Committee, appointed to consider this in 1957, found that of 43 different physical activities where data were available, 31 showed significant increases in participation, while only six were in decline. This analysis was limited to organised sports activity; there were also significant changes in informal sport, such as rock climbing, riding, skiing and watersports.¹²⁶ UK provision was lagging behind other countries, and Wolfenden urged a greater level of access to the countryside, and to inland water, even at the cost of disturbing the tranquil enjoyment of others; national pride was apparently at stake.¹²⁷

Wolfenden's findings were germane to Scotland too.¹²⁸ Scotland evinced significant growth in mountaineering, skiing, equestrian sport, watersports, and angling; golf was showing both rapid increase and unmet demand. Walking and cycling were increasing in popularity, albeit more slowly.¹²⁹ Sports' intrusion into the countryside was especially evident at Loch Lomond, where watersports, angling and canoeing were all contending for space, and conflicting with the tranquillity sought by other visitors.¹³⁰ The growth of skiing at Cairn Gorm was a pressure point where recreation, both in terms of the unique requirements of skiing and the more general aspirations of

¹²⁵ Edinburgh, National Records of Scotland: Scottish Development Department Archive DD12/897/1. F.P. Tindall, *Introductory Paper for Study Group 9*, early 1965.

¹²⁶ Central Council for Physical Recreation, *Sport and the Community: The Report of the Wolfenden Committee on Sport* (London: Central Council for Physical Recreation, 1960), pp. 9-11.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 29–30, 23.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 89.

¹²⁹ Nicholls and Young, *Loch Lomond*, p. 15.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 18.

ramblers, came into conflict with environmental interests. Frank Tindall thought that Scotland should expect to become a major provider of opportunity for active outdoor recreation, citing the country's enormous potential in this regard.¹³¹ The government's position was that the private sector could respond to some of the demand for facilities for outdoor sport, but that a measure of public sector provision was inevitable.¹³² And in fact government funding had already been provided to open Glenmore Lodge as a centre for mountain sports in 1948, and a national recreation centre at Largs which opened in 1958.¹³³ But provision for sport remained patchy, and a national conference in 1963 on the future of sport in Scotland learned that Stockholm had six multi-sport facilities within the city, whereas Glasgow had none. Awareness of this deficit led to the provision of significant funding for a new facility at Bellahouston in Glasgow, and for the Meadowbank Stadium in Edinburgh in preparation for the 1970 Commonwealth Games.¹³⁴

Recreation had a further recognisable impact in Scotland through field sports. These were an important dimension of rural life, with economic significance (at least to protagonists), and arguably representing an aspect of cultural heritage. It was estimated in 2000 that there were 340 sporting estates, amounting to over 5 million acres and 30% of privately-owned land in Scotland.¹³⁵ Moreover, the owners of these estates formed alliances based on intermarriage and family ties, including links to royalty, and were part of the Scottish network of powerful influence; this was not an

¹³¹ Edinburgh, National Records of Scotland: Scottish Development Department Archive DD12/897/1. F.P. Tindall, *Introductory Paper for Study Group 9*, early 1965.

¹³² Edinburgh, National Records of Scotland: Scottish Development Department Archive DD12/2846. Note from Sir Keith Joseph, Minister of Housing and Local Government, circulated to SDD, 25 September 1964.

¹³³ Ian Thomson, 'Scotland', in J. Riordan and A. Kruger (eds.), *European Cultures in Sport: Examining the Nations and Regions* (Bristol: Intellect Books, 2003), pp. 23–45 (p. 24);

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 28-30.

¹³⁵ Wightman and Higgins, 'Sporting Estates', p. 18.

easy group to ignore or discount.¹³⁶ Field sports relied to a large extent on the landowners' capacity to restrict access to their land during the season, and demanded that they raise a stock of game, protected from disturbance that might affect their breeding, or might encourage migration to neighbouring land. There were therefore strong concerns over uncontrolled access, including among the members of the Scottish Land and Property Federation whose response, in 1946, to the Ramsay proposals included protests over loss of sporting value, and demands for compensation for the depreciation of sporting rights that they feared would result from implementation of national park proposals.¹³⁷ The Earl of Haddo drew attention to the marginal profitability of grouse-shooting, which was put at risk by uncontrolled access, whilst deer in calf could be harmed by disturbance, and angling disrupted by canoeing.¹³⁸ The Red Deer Commission and the Game Research Association took similar positions.¹³⁹ Concern over field sports was shared by the Duke of Edinburgh, who was reported as having hurled intemperate abuse at some walkers on the Balmoral estate he thought were disturbing game.¹⁴⁰ Other voices included a Mr. McSalvesen, a proprietor in the Pentland Hills: 'we now find we can never undertake any sporting activities on Edinburgh holiday weekends'.¹⁴¹ McSalvesen acknowledged, however, that the landowners would have to give some ground to recreation, while

¹³⁶ P. Higgins, L. Jackson and G. Jarvie, 'Deer Forests, Sporting Estates and Elites in the 1990s', *Scottish Centre Research Papers in Sport, Leisure and Society*, 2 (1997), 32–52 (p. 44).

¹³⁷ Edinburgh: National Records of Scotland: Scottish Landowners' Federation Archive GD 325/2/198: Memorandum from Scottish Land and Property Federation to SLF, 5 June 1946.

¹³⁸ Edinburgh: National Records of Scotland: Scottish Development Department Archive: DD12/896: Earl of Haddo: 'The Effect of the Walker on Game' (paper to 'Countryside in 1970' Study Group 9, 1965).

¹³⁹ Edinburgh: National Records of Scotland: Scottish Development Department Archive: DD12/896: Red Deer Commission: 'Disturbance of Deerstalking by Visitors' (paper to 'Countryside in 1970' Study Group 9, 1965); Game Birds Association, Resolution to 'Countryside in 1970', Study Group 9: *Proceedings 1965*, p. 66.

¹⁴⁰ *Scotland on Sunday*, 22 April 1990; the intruders turned out to be on a Duke of Edinburgh Award programme.

¹⁴¹ Edinburgh: National Records of Scotland: Scottish Landowners' Federation Archive GD 325/2/198: letter from Mr J. McSalvesen of Spylaw to SLF, 11 February 1972.

Lord Ogilvy, with the support of *Country Life*, urged his counterparts to accept the need for concessions, as a preferable alternative to the confiscation of land.¹⁴²

As for the natural world, its UK-wide champion was the Nature Conservancy, and its response to the emergence of environmental awareness was a National Nature Week, which took place in May 1963 and secured a high profile, with an audience of 46,000 visitors to its main exhibition. The Duke of Edinburgh was among them, and noted not only the impressive level of interest in the subject but also the fragmented nature of the pro-countryside forces. He suggested a national conference to encourage the disparate interest groups to speak with one voice and to develop a shared vision of the future countryside.¹⁴³ Max Nicholson at the Nature Conservancy responded by setting up the first of the 'Countryside in 1970' conferences.¹⁴⁴ This event, one of three such conferences working towards an understanding of the type of countryside delegates wanted to see for the 1970s, was held in November 1963. An initial environmental emphasis quickly broadened, however, with the Duke of Edinburgh's opening address calling for a management of rural areas 'for the fair and equal benefit of all groups that have a direct interest in their use'.¹⁴⁵ The first conference, limited to 200 invited delegates, was characterised by predictable statements of position from organisational representatives, with little evidence of a willingness to compromise, and

¹⁴² Edinburgh: National Records of Scotland: Scottish Landowners' Federation Archive GD 325/2/198: letter from Mr J. McSalvesen of Spylaw to SLF, 11 February 1972; Lord Ogilvy, speech to Kirriemuir Angling Club, 6 February 1965, reported to 'Countryside in 1970' Study Group 9; Editorial: 'North Wind of Change', in *Country Life*, 18 February 1965.

¹⁴³ 'The Countryside in 1970', *Proceedings of the First Conference, 1963* (London, HMSO, 1964) p. xxi.

¹⁴⁴ Max Nicholson (1904 – 2003) was an environmentalist and naturalist who was active in ornithology. He set up the Nature Conservancy as a research and scientific service and became its Director General in 1952; in 1961 he was involved in establishing the World Wildlife Fund, and worked from 1966 to 1989 as Head of the consultancy firm Land Use Consultants, which he had created, and which pioneered an integrated approach to the environment.

¹⁴⁵ 'The Countryside in 1970', *Proceedings of the First Conference*, p. 1.

the identification of a multiplicity of issues with no consensus on how to tackle them.¹⁴⁶ Matthew Kelly has described it as 'a mix of snobbery and paternalism', which found common ground only in a hatred of leisure motoring, and which failed to achieve Nicholson's aim of achieving a more holistic approach to the countryside.¹⁴⁷ Its main output reflected both fragmentation and impotence: a 'Chart of Human Impacts' which acknowledged, but did nothing to resolve, numerous areas of human activity whose impact on the countryside gave rise to concern; these included recreation, but only as one of twenty-three separate issues affecting the countryside.¹⁴⁸ The Scottish examples given to illustrate the adverse impact of recreation included, unsurprisingly, Cairn Gorm and Loch Lomond, but showed distinct overstatement, highlighting rambling on the Island of Rhum [*sic*] and picnicking in the Tentsmuir Forest in Fife, neither of which can have been especially problematic, not least since Rùm could only be accessed at this time by written permission of the landowner.¹⁴⁹

The government had studiously avoided engagement with the event, which it characterised as a 'propaganda performance'.¹⁵⁰ *Country Life*, however, welcomed the exposure given to 'a countryside suddenly and dramatically changing for the worse', and considered the occasion 'more successful than anyone had dared to hope'.¹⁵¹ But although Michael Dower, who had attended as a delegate, described it as a 'formidable

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 9.

¹⁴⁷ Matthew Kelly, 'Conventional Thinking and the Fragile Birth of the Nation State in Britain' in Wilko von Hardenberg *et al* (eds.): *The Nature State: Rethinking the History of Conservation* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2017), pp. 114-134 (pp. 121-122).

¹⁴⁸ 'The Countryside in 1970', *Proceedings 1963*, pp. 111-151.

¹⁴⁹ Pers. Comm. Michael Stephenson, a member of a study group from Dunfermline College that visited Rùm at this time.

¹⁵⁰ Kew: National Archives: Ministry of Land and Natural Resources Archive JH9/2: Letter from H. Turner, MLNR to P. Clifton, HM Treasury, 17 August 1965.

¹⁵¹ 'Tomorrow's Countryside', *Country Life*, 14 November 1963, p. 1230; 'A Time for Action', *Country Life*, 25 November 1965, p. 1392.

occasion', he also perceived limited achievement and few new ideas.¹⁵² Nicholson acknowledged that the conference had not satisfactorily addressed areas such as planning and recreation, and a follow-up event was already being planned as the 1963 one drew to a close.¹⁵³

There was also a recognition that the conference had offered little to Scottish interests, and an attempt to redress this came in the form of a conference in Inverness in 1964, led by NTS and aiming to 'bring Scotland's problems into focus and...determine how some at least can be resolved.'¹⁵⁴ The conference's stated objective was an attempt to reconcile a more mobile urban population insistent on experiencing the countryside with the need to conserve natural beauty and protect existing land uses. It understandably failed to resolve this problem, but did reach agreement on the need for a Countryside Commission to mediate these issues, and an interim working party to assist the Secretary of State in examination of them.¹⁵⁵ The NTS opened discussion between itself, the Nature Conservancy and the FC on the management of countryside visitors, and expressed the hope that the government would provide financial support for public sector landowners to provide visitor facilities and amenities. They thought this would more easily be achieved in Scotland, thanks to the informal networks that already existed and a general disposition to co-operate.¹⁵⁶

¹⁵² Michael Dower, Book Review of 'The Countryside in 1970: Proceedings 1963', *J. of Royal Society of Arts*, 112 (1964), 619-20; Dower 'The Future of the Countryside', p. 107

¹⁵³ E. M. Nicholson, 'The Countryside in 1970 Conferences', *Quarterly Review*, 304 (1966), 121-130 (p. 122).

¹⁵⁴ Edinburgh: National Records of Scotland: Carnegie Trust Archive GD 281/136/1/18: Letter to Carnegie Trust from Jamie Stormonth Darling, NTS, 3 March 1964.

¹⁵⁵ Edinburgh: National Records of Scotland: Carnegie Trust Archive GD 281/136/1/18: report on conference to Carnegie Trust Education Subcommittee, 3 June 1964. National Trust for Scotland Archives: NTS JD/1311 C44 Part II: Letter, Lord Wemyss to Secretary of State, 6 May 1964.

¹⁵⁶ Edinburgh: National Trust for Scotland Archive NTS JD/1311 C44 part II: Letter from Jamie Stormonth Darling to Major Gordon, 16 April 1964.

The second 'Countryside in 1970' conference, in 1965, was on a larger scale than its predecessor: 340 delegates from a wide range of bodies heard the Duke of Edinburgh, again in the chair, describe it as 'the biggest and most comprehensive "group-think" on the...future of the countryside ever attempted.'¹⁵⁷ It benefitted greatly from the preparatory work of several Study Groups which met in advance and over a prolonged period; this allowed a consensus to coalesce around twelve key issues, including recreation (Study Group 6, with Dower as an adviser) and traffic (Study Group 7, chaired by Colin Buchanan), as well as a specific group for Scotland (Study Group 9, led by Bob Grieve). The groups brought agreed statements and recommendations to the conference plenaries, paving the way for adoption of several practical outcomes.

Study Group 9, the embodiment of the working party called for by the 1964 Inverness conference, was encouraged to take a holistic approach to Scotland, and it reported several defining and distinctive characteristics indicating that recreational solutions developed for England might need to be reshaped to ensure applicability north of the border. It noted the existence of a large resource of wild country, some of it near urban populations, but argued against designating national parks in Scotland, fearing these would concentrate recreational pressures in scenically vulnerable areas. Instead, the group suggested better roadside and off-road facilities for visitors in the places they already visited, welcoming initiatives in this respect already being taken by the NTS and the FC.¹⁵⁸ The group acknowledged recreation pressures both from tourism and from the expansion and democratisation of sport, and welcomed positive economic and social impacts from both forces.¹⁵⁹ The weakness of Scottish local authorities,

¹⁵⁷ 'The Countryside in 1970', *Proceedings 1965*, p. 100.

¹⁵⁸ 'The Countryside in 1970', *Reports of the Second Conference, 1965* (London, Royal Society of Arts, 1966), pp. 9.10, 9.25.

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 9.4.

especially in planning, was noted.¹⁶⁰ The group looked not only at the familiar problem localities, but also at the recreational possibilities of places like Glen Trool in Galloway, the East Lothian coast, and derelict land on the Upper Clyde.¹⁶¹ The group's main recommendation was the creation of a body with powers to determine and implement countryside policy – a Countryside Commission for Scotland – a proposal made in full awareness of the parallel recommendations emerging from the English study groups, and which restated a main outcome of the 1964 conference.¹⁶² But they did not include country parks in their conclusions, even though they were aware that Buchanan's group was moving in this direction.

The 1965 conference differed from its predecessor in another key respect: the interest of central Government. An initial fear that attendance in 1963 might embarrass the government had been superseded by the idea that engagement might help to prevent government being ambushed by an unexpected recommendation.¹⁶³ Moreover, the new Labour government hoped the conference would lend high-profile support to its own developing countryside policy, and planned to use the conference as a platform for a ministerial statement, to demonstrate that it was leading on the countryside, rather than being driven by the 'Countryside in 1970' movement.¹⁶⁴ At the conference, Buchanan's Study Group 7 (traffic) had recommended research into the creation of 'counter-attractions' as a means of reducing pressure on vulnerable countryside.¹⁶⁵ Study Group 6, the outdoor recreation group, similarly proposed increased facility

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 9.14.

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*, pp 9.3 - 9.8.

¹⁶² *Ibid.*, p. 9.19.

¹⁶³ Kew: National Archives: Ministry of Land and Natural Resources Archive JH9/2: Letter from H. Turner, MLNR to P. Clifton, HM Treasury, 17 August 1965.

¹⁶⁴ Kew, National Archives, Ministry of Land and Natural Resources Archive JH 9/2. Memo, H. Turner, MLNR to P. Clifton, HM Treasury, 17 August 1965.

¹⁶⁵ 'The Countryside in 1970', *Reports 1965*, p. 61.

supply.¹⁶⁶ The Duke of Edinburgh expressed the hope that the Minister's statement would be both definitive and responsive to these proposals, since 'members are [un]likely to be satisfied with vague promises...they will be looking for decision and for action'.¹⁶⁷

The minister, Fred Willey, was thus caught between the expectations of his colleagues, who looked to him to assert control of the issue, and those of the conference, who expected him to be responsive to the lead they were giving. His speech failed to excite either constituency, and received a muted reception, in spite of promising the widely hoped-for Countryside Commissions for England and Scotland, and a commitment to the creation of 'country parks', areas set aside for intensive recreation to reduce pressure on more vulnerable countryside.¹⁶⁸ *Country Life* gave the speech a lukewarm welcome, but *Nature* thundered: 'Seldom...can a Cabinet Minister have confronted a meeting of [this] standing and authority ... with a brief so ill-prepared and irrelevant to the critical issues.'¹⁶⁹ It summed up his proposals as 'derisory', and claimed the country park proposals paid little attention to the real issues facing the countryside.¹⁷⁰ Buchanan was clearly disappointed that Study Group 7's conclusions, which stressed the need for a strategic approach to siting, had not been fully considered, and the Duke's polite welcome to the idea of country parks was tempered by doubts over the availability of suitable land, and a suspicion that users' views had been emphasised at the expense of the supply side.¹⁷¹ County councils, on the other hand, seem to have liked the flexibility implicit in the lack of definition of country parks,

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 21.

¹⁶⁷ 'The Countryside in 1970', *Proceedings 1965*, p. 101.

¹⁶⁸ Kew, National Archives, Ministry of Land and Natural Resources Archive, JH 9/2.

¹⁶⁹ 'A Time for Action', *Country Life* 25 November 1965, p. 1392; 'Editorial', *Nature*, 25 December 1965, p.1244.

¹⁷⁰ 'Editorial', *Nature*, 25 December 1965, p. 1243.

¹⁷¹ 'The Countryside in 1970', *Reports 1965*, pp. 122, 140.

and (perhaps with one eye on their existing estates) foresaw little difficulty over land availability.¹⁷²

The country park initiative had been agreed by the government's Home Affairs Committee in October 1965, just ahead of Willey's conference speech.¹⁷³ But while country parks were a centrepiece of the Minister's presentation, it seems this idea was only introduced at a late stage. An outline of Willey's speech dated just ten days before the event makes no reference to country parks; they were added in following an internal memo the next day, which highlighted the Ministry's developing interest in this approach, and the desirability of including a degree of substance in what would otherwise have been thin gruel.¹⁷⁴

Other political drivers were at work too; both main political parties had included a commitment to the countryside in their manifestos for the 1964 election. Keith Joseph, a Minister in the Conservative government, had in 1963 renewed Addison's suggestion of intensive open-air recreation sites, which would not only address the need for recreational countryside but could reduce pressure on more sensitive areas.¹⁷⁵ He was supported in this view by the National Parks Commission, which suggested 'deliberate provision' of recreational space on urban fringes or on the edges of national parks, to draw recreation away from scenic locations.¹⁷⁶ Joseph also saw potential in restoration of derelict land for recreational or amenity purposes (and noted that local

¹⁷² Kew: National Archives: Ministry of Land and Natural Resources Archive JH9/2: Note from Mr Chilvers on meeting with County Council representatives, 6 January 1966.

¹⁷³ Cherry, *Environmental History*, p. 135.

¹⁷⁴ Kew, National Archives, Ministry of Land and Natural Resources Archive JH 9/2. Speech draft dated 2 November 1965; memo from J. Hannigan, MLNR, 3 November 1965.

¹⁷⁵ Edinburgh: National Records of Scotland: Scottish Development Department Archive DD12/2846: Note from Sir Keith Joseph, Minister of Housing and Local Government, on proposals for a Countryside Commission, 25 September 1964.

¹⁷⁶ Edinburgh, National Records of Scotland: Scottish Development Department Archive DD12/2846. Memo to SDD from National Parks Commission, enclosing text of NPC's 15th Annual Report, 17 December 1964.

authorities already had both powers and funding in place to do this).¹⁷⁷ The Conservatives' manifesto undertook to 'satisfy the need for recreational facilities without harm to rural and farming interests', and promised a Countryside Commission.¹⁷⁸ The incoming Labour government in 1964 was similarly minded, believing that recreation had overtaken the national parks and needed further intervention; it had promised to 'save the countryside from needless despoliation'.¹⁷⁹ Labour's Scottish party conference in 1966 went so far as to pass a motion calling for the acquisition of private Scottish estates and their transformation into national parks, though this radical idea was never formally adopted as policy.¹⁸⁰ Posturing aside, the course of progress during the 1960s suggests that neither party seemed really interested in determining the detailed facts underlying recreational supply and demand, and this allowed Dower, the 'Countryside in 1970', and (for Scotland) Study Group 9, to set the agenda for change.¹⁸¹ The government's priority was to respond to political pressure; understanding, and dealing with, the complex and conflicting needs of the countryside could be conveniently left to the new commissions.

The policy vacuum had left plenty of space for pressure groups and vested interests. The community and voluntary sector was well represented at the 'Countryside in 1970', especially at the decisive 1965 conference, but a closer look reveals several gaps in this representation. Organisations speaking for landowners and land management were present, of course; and several recreational sports, particularly field sports,

¹⁷⁷ PP: Ministry of Housing and Local Government, *New Life for Dead Lands: Derelict Acres Reclaimed* (London, HMSO, 1963), pp 1,5.

¹⁷⁸ Conservative Party: *Prosperity with a Purpose* (Election Manifesto, 18 September 1964).

¹⁷⁹ Cherry, *Environmental History*, p. 131; Labour Party, *The New Britain* (Election manifesto 1964).

¹⁸⁰ Edinburgh, National Records of Scotland: Scottish Development Department Archive DD12/3010. Background briefing notes for discussion on creation of CCS, 11 February 1966, p. 50b.

¹⁸¹ Cherry and Rogers, *Rural Change*, p. 133.

received invitations. More conservative national groups such as the Women's Institute and the National Playing Fields Association fielded representatives. Many of these doubled up as countryside champions – Sylvia Sayer, a campaigner for the Dartmoor National Park, attended on behalf of the Commons, Open Spaces and Footpaths Preservation Society, and Colonel J. P. Grant, a major forestry landowner in the Cairngorms, for the Scottish Tourist Board (STB). But groups that focussed on the disadvantaged or vulnerable, on children and young people, or on the socially marginalised, were conspicuous by their absence.¹⁸² Although Dower had recommended closer engagement with such groups, and discussion of social issues, this suggestion was not pursued by the organisers.¹⁸³ The acceptance by the 'Countryside in 1970', and later by policy-makers, that the invited guests represented an appropriate range of interests suggests a partial and even complacent perception of the views needing to be heard. A Scottish example illustrates this: in all the public sector presence at the 'Countryside in 1970' events, there was no place for the Crofters' Commission, responsible for supervising subsistence farming in the Highlands; but there was plenty of representation of the landowner and field sports interests that often conflicted with crofters' aspirations.

¹⁸² 'The Countryside in 1970', *Proceedings 1965*, p. 159. The attendance issue is discussed more fully in P. Back, 'A Propaganda Performance? The 'Countryside in 1970' Conferences and Their Impact on Scotland' (unpublished conference paper, 2015), pp. 17–21.

¹⁸³ Kew: National Archives: Nature Conservancy Archive FT 22/60: Letter from M. Dower to M. Nicholson, 1 September 1964.

Reappraisal

Dower's influence on the debate demands a reappraisal of his forecasts, not only with the benefit of hindsight but also from a more contemporary perspective which failed to materialise at the time. His argument relied heavily on an American analysis of recreation which forecast apocalyptic growth in demand for recreation; Dower took the view that Britain was following the same course. The American study was based on regression analysis of the same variables that Dower identified as causative in the UK, but Dower preferred to rely on published forecasts and straight-line extrapolation, which made no allowance for the possibility of any intervening event over the course of forty years. It is of course unreasonable to expect him to have anticipated the impact of birth control on demography, or of the 1973 oil crisis on recreational motoring, but some interruption to the straight line could reasonably have been expected in an increasingly technological and internationally febrile age. As the economist Christopher Freeman put it (commenting on a different forecast), 'we should not fall into the error of...failure to consider the tremendous potential of [change]', nor indeed of science or political upheaval.¹⁸⁴ It is noticeable that Dower's forecasts leaned strongly towards the most pessimistic, the ones that best suited his argument; his estimate of the number of cars in the year 2000, for example, was among the highest of several forecasts made in the 1960s.¹⁸⁵ And it might have been reasonable to suggest that the fashion for countryside motoring would not last, but might lose ground

¹⁸⁴ Christopher Freeman, 'Malthus with a Computer' in H. S. D. Cole et al (eds.), *Thinking about the Future: A Critique of "The Limits to Growth"* (Brighton, Sussex University Press, 1973), pp 5-13 (p. 11).

¹⁸⁵ Dower, 'Fourth Wave', p. 123; British Road Federation Basic Road Statistics (1968) (cited by D. Rubinstein and C. Speakman, *Leisure, Transport and the Countryside*, p. 2); Transport and Road Research Laboratory (1967) cited by Rubinstein and Speakman. *op. cit.*, p. 3; C. Buchanan, *Traffic in Towns* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1963), p. 35; 'The Countryside in 1970', *Reports 1965*, pp 6.4, 7.6; W. Plowden, *The Motor Car and Politics* (London: Bodley Head, 1971), p. 326.

to other popular activities such as gardening or television, already major and growing elements in many households.¹⁸⁶ As psychologist Marie Jahoda has pointed out, people are not necessarily passive accepters of change, but modify their lifestyles and behaviours to adapt to it.¹⁸⁷

Dower's forecasts include no references to source material, but are nevertheless part of a wider movement of population, economic and environmental forecasting, of variable provenance, that gained prominence in the 1950s and 1960s. They included the work of Paul Ehrlich on population explosion, the Club of Rome (established in 1968 'to promote understanding of global challenges'), and Donella Meadows *et al*, whose 'The Limits to Growth' was published in 1972.¹⁸⁸ Closer to home, they included Ian Nairn's influential 1955 diatribe on the future of the UK as population growth and development, eroding the distinction between town and country, 'take us closer to the edge of the abyss'.¹⁸⁹ All shared a pessimistic view of the future unless remedial action were taken; Asa Briggs described this as 'doom-watching'.¹⁹⁰ And in Dower's defence, it also needs to be said that accurate forecasting was not being well modelled by bodies with formal responsibilities in this area: the statistician William Page has described the UK government's forecasting record at this time as based on 'extrapolate and guess'.¹⁹¹

¹⁸⁶ Sillitoe, *Planning for Leisure*, p. 37; by this time (1969) television was by far the most popular activity, followed by gardening and indoor crafts.

¹⁸⁷ Marie Jahoda, 'Postscript on Social Change' in H. S. D. Cole *et al* (eds.), *Thinking about the Future: A Critique of "The Limits to Growth"* (Brighton, Sussex University Press, 1973), pp. 209-215 (p. 211).

¹⁸⁸ Paul Ehrlich, *The Population Bomb* (New York, Sierra Club, 1968), www.clubofrome.org/about-us/history [accessed 18 September 2018]; Donella H. Meadows *et al*, *The Limits to Growth* (London, Earth Island, 1972).

¹⁸⁹ Ian Nairn: 'Outrage: The birth of Subtopia will be the death of us', *The Architectural Review*, June 1955.

¹⁹⁰ Asa Briggs, Preface to H. S. D. Cole *et al* (eds.), *Thinking about the Future: A Critique of "The Limits to Growth"* (Brighton, Sussex University Press, 1973), p. v.

¹⁹¹ William Page, 'Population Forecasting' in H. S. D. Cole *et al* (eds.), *Thinking about the Future: A Critique of "The Limits to Growth"* (Brighton, Sussex University Press, 1973), pp 159-174 (p. 171).

Dower himself revisited his work in 1978, when he defended the policy of segregating recreation into designated areas, and contended that ‘the countryside is for all, but only if they use it in a way which suits our perception of the countryside in its beauty and quietude.’ He argued that country parks had been effective in striking a balance between the demand for recreation and the need to protect other countryside land uses.¹⁹² At the same conference, Marion Shoard was scathing: whilst accepting that ‘Fourth Wave’ had ‘probably had more influence than any other single thing on the form recreational planning has since assumed’, she noted that Dower’s projections had ‘proved wildly wrong’ and characterised them as misleading and compounded by flawed research. She argued that little reference had been made to ordinary people’s needs or aspirations, while influential vested interests in maintaining the *status quo* had strengthened their positions through Dower’s forecasts.¹⁹³

By 1993, when Dower was again invited to reappraise his work, he was willing to acknowledge that events had overtaken his work. He had moved from a defensive position of containment to a more inclusive standpoint where leisure opportunities should be more widely available, and not only to those with the means to access them.¹⁹⁴ This reflected a more general change of perspective, whereby leisure had become perceived as a social benefit rather than an indulgence, and policy had moved towards ensuring need was met, rather than suppressed or redirected.

¹⁹² Michael Dower, ‘The Promise - for Whom Have We Aimed to Provide, and How Was It to Be Achieved?’, in ‘Countryside for All? A Review of the Use People Make of the Countryside for Recreation’ (Unpublished conference report, York: Countryside Recreation Research and Advisory Group, 1978), pp. 3–29 (p. 9).

¹⁹³ Marion Shoard, ‘Access: Can Present Opportunities Be Widened?’, in ‘Countryside for All? A Review of the Use People Make of the Countryside for Recreation’ (Unpublished conference report, York: Countryside Recreation Research and Advisory Group, 1978), pp. 86–119 (pp. 89–91, 94).

¹⁹⁴ Michael Dower, ‘“Fourth Wave” Revisited’, in S. Glyptis (ed.), *Leisure and the Environment: Essays in Honour of J. A. Patmore*, (London: Belhaven Press, 1993), pp. 15–21 (pp. 15, 18).

What Dower could easily have ascertained, however, was that Scotland was different. The UK-wide population growth he cited was not actually being experienced in Scotland, where population had been in decline since 1951. Tourism in Scotland was flagging, having flatlined since 1961 after a period of sustained growth.¹⁹⁵ Another of Dower's factors, personal income, was significantly lower in Scotland, at around 90% of the UK average in 1964-65.¹⁹⁶ Above all, the motor-car was much less of a challenge; car ownership in Scotland in the early 1960s was significantly lower than in the UK generally, with 106 cars per 1000 population in 1961, against 140 in the UK as a whole.¹⁹⁷ And even though car ownership in Scotland doubled in the decade up to 1971, it still remained substantially below the level of England.¹⁹⁸ A White Paper in 1969 examining Scotland's trunk roads only mentioned recreational traffic as problematic on the A82 alongside Loch Lomond, and on narrow highland roads, so there was evidently little pressure on other parts of the network, recreational or otherwise.¹⁹⁹ The paper notes that in 1966 Clydeside had one car for every eleven people, in contrast to more than one car for every seven residents of the West Midlands conurbation, and the Clydesiders also used their cars less often.²⁰⁰ Whatever foundation Dower's argument may have had in England & Wales, it stood on much less solid ground in Scotland.

And in considering the impact of the debate in Scotland, Study Group 9 and its deliberations also demand some reappraisal. It was assembled to review all aspects

¹⁹⁵ *The Scotsman*, 21 July 1965: 'Scottish resorts face a critical season'.

¹⁹⁶ Coppock, *Leisure in Scotland*, p. 235.

¹⁹⁷ 'The Countryside in 1970', *Reports 1965*, p. 9.26.

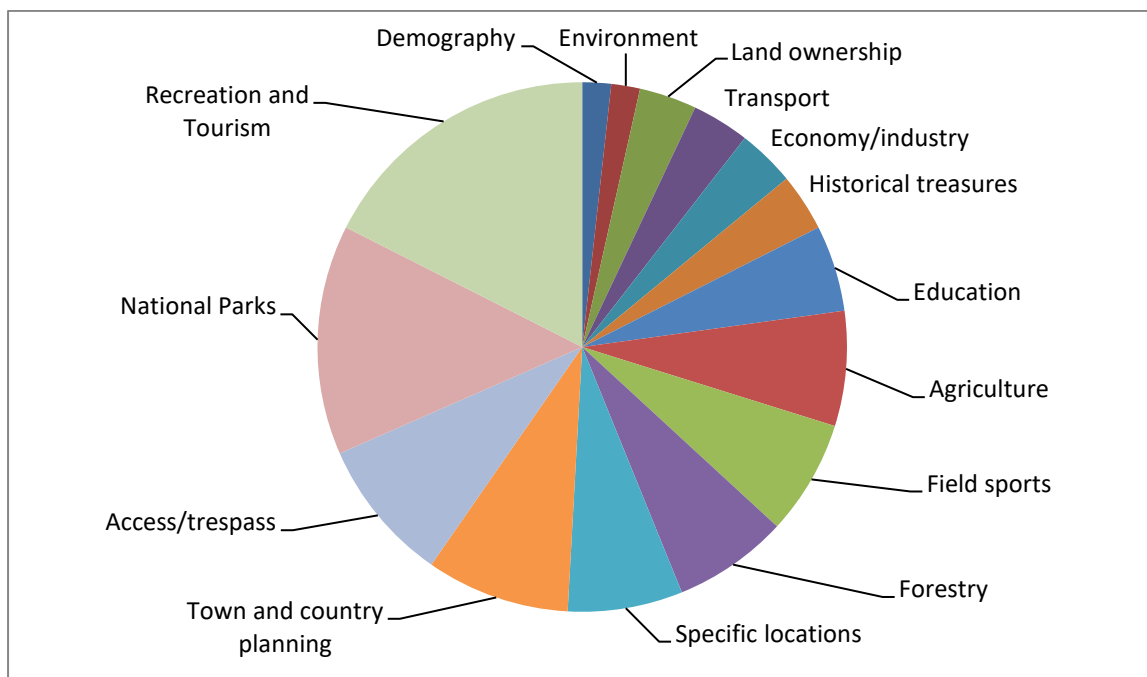
¹⁹⁸ CCS *et al*, *STARPS Vol. 1 Strategic Issues* (CCS, Scottish Sports Council, STB, Forestry Commission, c. 1975), p. 10.

¹⁹⁹ PP: Cmnd. 3953: *Scottish Roads in the 1970s* (Edinburgh, HMSO, 1969), pp 6, 8, 9.

²⁰⁰ B.V. Martin, 'Prediction of Future Demand Levels', in P.M. Townroe (ed.), *Social and Political Consequences of the Motor Car* (Newton Abbot, David & Charles, 1974), 28-39 (p. 29).

of the Scottish countryside, and seems to have succeeded in reconciling some sectoral interests in the recreational realm, at least in general terms. Its report was widely circulated, with twenty copies sent to the NFU alone, and many more circulating internally within the SDD; this was a document with significant potential to influence.²⁰¹ But it left a good deal of tricky detail to be negotiated by its proposed Commission, while a closer analysis of its discussion papers shows how far these were from the intended holism:

Fig. 3.2: Subjects explored by Study Group 9



Source: *'The Countryside in 1970' Reports, 1965, pp. 9.19 - 9.22; Papers covering more than one subject area have been added to the total for each subject.*

²⁰¹ Edinburgh, National Records of Scotland: Scottish Development Department Archive DD12/3011: Handwritten note on letter from NFU to SDD, 3 December 1965, and associated correspondence.

Half the group's attention was spent on four topics: recreation, national parks, access, and the planning system. Agriculture, forestry and field sports account for much of its remaining deliberations. The group spent little time examining demographic decline, the erosion of heavy industry, poverty, housing, or social issues; and it largely overlooked the massive landscape impact (and legacy) of extractive industries, or their consequences for rural environments, communities and employment. Yet, as chapter 2 has demonstrated, these were prominent issues at the time in rural Scotland.

This perhaps reflects the group's membership, which included academics, landowners, and representatives from public bodies, alongside the NTS and two 'independents', but which lacked the breadth that wider recruitment might have brought.²⁰² And in fact, concern about both its terms of reference and its membership were being aired in government circles in 1964. The SDD feared that its remit would lack focus, and expressed doubt about the representatives and the possibility that their views might fetter government's future options.²⁰³ But the SLF welcomed the approach, and pressed the Scottish Office to allocate at least a quarter of the available places on the group to landowner representatives; in the end, they were allotted two of the twelve places.²⁰⁴ The NTS meanwhile declined an invitation to act as the group's secretariat, because of their difficult relationship with the SLF over the principle of countryside access.²⁰⁵

²⁰² 'The Countryside in 1970', *Reports 1965*, p. 9.1; the independent members were a solicitor and a journalist.

²⁰³ Edinburgh, National Records of Scotland: Scottish Development Department Archive DD12/2926. Letter, I.M. Robertson, SDD, to George Pottinger, Principal Private Secretary at Scottish Office, 16 October 1964.

²⁰⁴ Edinburgh, National Records of Scotland: Scottish Development Department Archive DD12/2926. Letter, Scottish Landowners Federation to Haddow (SDD), 30 November 1964; *Countryside in 1970, Reports 1965*, p. 9.1.

²⁰⁵ Edinburgh, National Records of Scotland: Scottish Development Department Archive DD12/2926: Letter, Lord Wemyss (NTS) to Max Nicholson (Nature Conservancy), November 1964.

The group badly under-delivered on assurances that the group 'will not be regarded as a *pis aller* but as an expedient which will enable Scottish experience of all kinds and Scottish opinion of all shades to contribute.'²⁰⁶ The opportunity to tap into interests and opinions not represented at conference level was missed, and as a result key issues in Scotland were overlooked, including the massive socio-geographical changes being led by housing and economic development policies. The possibility of a comprehensive and appropriate response for Scotland was thus lost to the clamour from the landowning and farming interests that dominated the countryside movement.

Overall Assessment

In contrast to the access objectives and democratic idealism of John Dower and Hobhouse discussed above, the tenor of the recreation debate in the early 1960s interpreted recreation as a threat to be contained, rather than an opportunity to promote environmental awareness, exercise, or exploration. Recreation encroached upon a rural idyll stewarded by people with 'awareness' of country ways; the threat came from a much larger cohort using the countryside for enjoyment, but whose presence and behaviour alike made them unwelcome to those in control. This led to a defensive approach based on containment and deflection, and meant that when discussion turned to provision the aim was to manage the problem into confined spaces rather than to seek to address unmet need. Had the focus been a more constructive one, perhaps based on Study Group 7's recommendation of a strategic approach to facilities provision, the country park solution might well have been

²⁰⁶ Edinburgh, National Records of Scotland: Scottish Development Department Archive DD12/2926. Letter, E. M. Nicholson (Nature Conservancy) to W. S. Murrie (SDD), 9 November 1964.

developed along more positive lines, producing a diverse range of facilities carefully located to address need whilst still giving due priority to protecting vulnerable countryside and economic interests; as it was, the more defensive views prevailed. The debate, and perhaps especially the conference representation, entirely vindicates Harrison's perspective of the domination of proprietorial rights, and a reluctance to challenge these interests, in the countryside debate, and verifies its applicability in a purely Scottish context.²⁰⁷

One fundamental conclusion emerges inescapably from this narrative: the country park, and the idea of space designated for high-intensity recreation, emerge directly from the failure of government to act decisively in the creation of national parks. From the very outset, national parks were expected to address three potentially conflicting objectives – conservation, production and recreation – in a landscape where control and management would be fragmented, due to the decision not to assert public ownership of the land. Addison had already established in the early thirties that this combination of objectives would not be feasible, and Abercrombie had suggested a 'horses for courses' approach that distinguished spatially between different primary purposes and different user groups, but this was ignored when national parks began to gain traction in the 1940s. Instead, the ambition was to satisfy all three land uses simultaneously, with little consensus as to which objective was the overriding priority; Matthew Kelly describes this as 'doing national parks on the cheap'.²⁰⁸ The national parks were not selected for accessibility – especially from London – and failed to resolve the incompatibility between production and the expectations of recreationalists

²⁰⁷ Harrison, *Countryside Recreation*, p. 3.

²⁰⁸ Kelly, 'Conventional Thinking', p. 116.

of a greater degree of freedom than they enjoyed in undesignated countryside. Although, as Kelly indicates, the issue had been framed between the wars as one of a right to enjoy high amenity landscapes, the national priorities linked to food and timber production were reaffirmed as the best means to a 'desirable' nature.²⁰⁹ Meanwhile, the scenic qualities so valued by the preservationists, in particular tranquillity, were compromised by a natural desire to visit places scenically worthy of designation, and an unforeseen increase in mobility that allowed this desire to be fulfilled.

The integration of recreation, tourism, rural economic development and nature conservation was always going to be difficult to achieve when these matters were fragmented within government. In Scotland, casual recreation had no national champion before CCS was established. CCS' responsibilities overlapped, or even clashed, with those of economic development agencies such as the HIDB or the FC. Tourism was made the responsibility of local authorities (some of whom were not favourably disposed towards it), while the environmental dimension fell under the UK-wide Nature Conservancy. These bodies did not always work in harmony, and their overarching policies were not always designed with one another in mind, making the achievement of any meaningful integration on the ground even more challenging, while the diversity of recreational need – sport was treated, and funded, differently to casual recreation – compounded the issue further. The development of country park policy and funding illustrates the impact of this fragmentation.

The reappraisal of Dower highlights three critical issues: his failure to qualify his straight-line forecast model with any statistical caution; the failure of most of his

²⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 114.

readership to offer any meaningful challenge to his forecasts; and the inapplicability of his model to the situation in Scotland. His impact on the debate was enormous: Reg Hookway, an early Director of the Countryside Commission, described it as 'that momentous paper...[it] had a great deal of influence at the time', leisure specialist George Torkildsen described it as 'a watershed publication', and even Marion Shoard, one of Dower's fiercer critics, acknowledged that it had had an impact exceeding that of any other contribution.²¹⁰ What seems to have made Dower influential, in spite of the weaknesses in his data management and his argument, is that he was articulating a problem that was well recognised by a powerful constituency in the form of the countryside lobby, and that he was offering a solution that seemed not only to satisfy the expectations of recreationalists, but would do so without threatening the interests of those who owned, valued or exploited the land for other purposes. He was also an active contributor in a network of influence through his relationships with bodies like the Civic Trust, the Nature Conservancy and the Town Planning Institute, among others, and had already been involved in the significant Lea Valley recreation project in 1964; the report on this foreshadowed 'Fourth Wave' by introducing his forecasts of increased population and demand for outdoor recreation.²¹¹ His suggestion of designated areas led naturally to the idea that unproductive land (such as reclaimed post-industrial land), or otherwise expendable sites, could be deployed effectively to meet a demand for countryside, and this resonated strongly with those who feared their land could become a magnet for trippers, offering an alternative 'honeypot' that would decoy visitors into self-contained sites where irresponsible behaviour would be

²¹⁰ R. J. S. Hookway, Welcome to delegates, 'Countryside for All? A Review of the Use People Make of the Countryside for Recreation (Unpublished conference proceedings, York, CRRAG, 1978), 1-2 (p. 1); George Torkildsen, *Leisure and Recreation Management* (London: Psychology Press, 2005), p. 59; Shoard, 'Access: Can Present Opportunities be Widened?', p. 89.

²¹¹ Michael Dower, *A Lea Valley Regional Park* (London: Civic Trust, 1964), n.p.

of much less consequence. Although his argument especially lacked force in Scotland, it suited proprietors to accept it and to act on it, and the disappointment is that there was so little challenge from other quarters, where there was already knowledge of depopulation, lower car ownership, reduced economic capacity and other characteristics of Scotland that should have been allowed to qualify the solution.

A reappraisal of Study Group 9 confirms this weakness. Its concentration on a few issues, to the exclusion of others, indicates where its members' priorities lay; it was the traditional countryside lobby that dominated the discussion, and which achieved its objectives in this group, while the interests of a wider Scottish population were less well served. The absence of important perspectives in Study Group 9 is hard to explain other than by suggesting that the group was led in a particular direction at the expense of other arguments – it received two papers on deer alone, none on housing or poverty – and that its debate reflects the weakness of advocates of other positions or perspectives. The voluntary sector in Scotland – both in the environmental and social spheres – lacked vitality and resources in the 1960s, and, whilst there is no evidence of any invitation to these groups to participate in Study Group 9, neither is there any recorded complaint about their exclusion. The organisers could point to the participation of bodies such as NTS, the NFU, or the SLF, and expert views from the Red Deer Commission or the Game Research Association, as evidence of a willingness to hear the voice of the third sector, without needing to feel underinformed in missing out on smaller charitable bodies with limited capacity to engage at this level. Dower and Study Group 9 thus alike played into the hands of the landed proprietors; the former by providing ammunition for their cause, and the latter by giving weight to their arguments and reaffirming the rejection of national parks. The recreation threat

had to be managed, contained or defused in some way, and the country park seemed to offer a perfect solution at little cost to the landowner, providing the recreationalist with space in the countryside where they could enjoy the rhododendrons and behave with impunity. The idea that any countryside would do, first propounded by Fairbrother, was still in evidence in 1976 when CCS published a report which, *inter alia*, suggested that people were reluctant to distinguish between the urban fringe and the wider countryside, and prioritised on convenience rather than land quality.²¹²

What is striking to a modern mind is the absence both of reliable data on the problem, and the paucity of research to address this, coupled with a lack of consultation with those visiting the countryside. The data problem was recognised by Dower, and picked up by others; it became more evident after Sillitoe's analysis revealed that more elaborate statistical methodologies would be needed to measure minority sports and activities adequately.²¹³ In the absence of data, anecdote was allowed to exert a disproportionate influence, and overstatement went unchallenged even when basic scrutiny would have called it into question.

The lack of consultation seems equally strange. Nowadays, few policies are implemented without some engagement with those affected by a decision. In this period, however, consultation was not commonplace, and it is not unusual to find the views of interest groups dominating at the expense of other participants in the debate. Martin Fitton, a CCS staffer, was critical in 1978: 'Who did they ask about country

²¹² J.R. Turner, 'The Role of the Countryside Commission for Scotland in Outdoor Recreation', in G. Dickinson (ed.), *Public Policy and Outdoor Recreation in Scotland* (Glasgow: University of Glasgow, Centre for Urban and Regional Research, 1985), pp. 13–26 (p. 17). Turner, a CCS staff member, was citing CCS' 'The Countryside Around Towns' report of 1976.

²¹³ Sillitoe, *Planning for Leisure*, p. 119.

parks? Nobody.’²¹⁴ But nothing changed in this respect throughout the rest of CCS’ lifetime. Country park policy was developed as a top-down solution, based on the views of known interest groups rather than the aspirations of those for whom they were provided – just as national park policy had been two decades earlier. This was by no means exceptional for the time, but adds credence to Curry’s assertion that the policy failed to recognise the needs and aspirations of those expected to use them.²¹⁵

The preservation movement’s role in this narrative is an interesting one. They were of course devoted to the conservation of scenic areas, but took an ambivalent view of landscape tourism. They deplored inappropriate behaviour in the countryside, damaging its idyllic tranquillity, but were adamant that countryside visiting was a universal right, not just for those with the advantage of living there already. However, there were always conditions attached to this welcome, and most frequently these were expressed in terms of educating people in country ways – in other words, ensuring adherence to the rules set by those with proprietary responsibilities for the countryside. This attitude, of bringing people into an understanding of the way the countryside operates, and setting conditions and limits on their enjoyment of it, finds its apotheosis in the Country Code of the 1930s; its replication in later Camping and Caravan Codes shows how persuasive this perspective could be. The MacEwans perhaps adopted a more reasoned view when they pointed out that neither education nor persuasion would overcome entrenched views on either side of the countryside debate.²¹⁶

²¹⁴ Martin Fitton, ‘The Reality - for Whom Are We Actually Providing?’, in ‘Countryside for All? A Review of the Use People Make of the Countryside for Recreation’ (Unpublished conference proceedings, York, CRRAG, 1978, 38–73 (p. 68).

²¹⁵ Curry, *Countryside Recreation*, p. xi.

²¹⁶ MacEwen and MacEwen, *National Parks : Conservation or Cosmetics?*, pp 282-283.

One organisation to emerge from this debate with a strengthened reputation is the NTS. It took a principled, if pragmatic, stand by recusing itself from the secretaryship of Study Group 9, and thus gave itself permission to express an opinion rather than being limited to the recording of other views. It pioneered, at least in Scotland, the collection and deployment of visitor data to inform its decisions about its properties and its visitor management strategies. It commissioned the Murray survey that uncovered the unpalatable truth that landowners, and not recreationalists, were largely to blame for despoliation of scenic areas.²¹⁷ But above all, it used its influence, informally rather than formally, to steer a course that led to its *ultima Thule* of a Countryside Commission. It consistently urged the creation of a body that could mediate issues of countryside management, access and development, pushing for this at the 'Countryside in 1970' in 1963, securing the support of Scotland's countryside bodies at Inverness in 1964, and gaining unanimous support in 1965 from Study Group 9.²¹⁸ The Trust was willing to see Scotland's natural resources used as the basis for a tourist industry, but balanced against the need to treat the landscape as a precious asset.²¹⁹ Although fundamentally committed to enabling people to visit its properties, its environmental practices attracted fulsome praise from Frank Fraser Darling in the 1969 Reith Lectures; Fraser Darling also highlighted its (still relatively unusual) willingness to partner with others, citing Fair Isle and St. Kilda.²²⁰ Culzean, as the case study shows, could have been a further example.

²¹⁷ Murray, *Highland Landscape*.

²¹⁸ D. Bremner, *For the Benefit of the Nation: The National Trust for Scotland, the First Seventy Years* (Edinburgh: National Trust for Scotland, 2001), pp 84-87.

²¹⁹ Edinburgh: National Trust for Scotland Archive: 32nd Annual Report, 1962.

²²⁰ Frank Fraser Darling, 'Wilderness and Plenty', in *Reith Lectures* (London: BBC Publications, 1969), p. 67.

Finally, were the Scots right to reject national parks? They had several reasons for doing so, though none of these reflect any sense of the will of the people in this matter. The argument that the parks would have created a magnet for tourists – essentially the same argument used, in reverse, to justify country parks – fails to recognise that most of the areas Ramsay recommended were remote, difficult to access, and already well-known, at least in Scotland, as exceptionally beautiful. Designation might have increased their attractiveness, but this was not inevitable, and (if it did) could have brought investment, jobs and opportunities for local people. The Direction Areas were spacious, so isolation and tranquillity would not be severely compromised. Encroachment on productive landscapes would have been much lower than in the English parks, because they were largely wilderness; the only real threat posed by designation was to field sports. On the other hand, there was no obvious structure or capacity to manage these areas, which crossed local authority boundaries, adding complexities of management that were excessive for small and under-resourced local authorities insufficiently committed to the idea. Designation might have confirmed the conservation priorities in these areas, and added a further layer of protection to fragile landscapes, though this is questionable. It might also have limited the exploitation of these highly scenic areas for projects such as hydro-electricity or for mineral extraction – though designation was to prove ineffective in this respect in England & Wales.

This chapter has brought the country park story forward as far as the ministerial commitment in 1965, showing how the idea emerged, and then developed, largely to address the failure of national park policy to resolve the challenge of countryside recreation. The idea was driven by proprietorial interests rather than by those for whom provision was to be made, and was taken up enthusiastically by those who saw

recreation as a threat to be contained, posed by those ignorant of countryside values. In this respect it validates the observations made by Jackson, Aitchison and Darby, among others, of the primacy of proprietorial values over those of inclusion or access, and extends these perceptions into Scotland.²²¹ The country park was not introduced for positive reasons – for instance, to promote healthy exercise, environmentalism, or outdoor leisure – but rather as a defensive approach offering protection to more valued landscapes and activities, and as a distraction for those for whom any countryside, however bland, would suffice. The arguments put forward were both anecdotal and overstated, especially in relation to Scotland, and rooted in the idea of containment rather than opportunity. They were also founded on an incomplete understanding of the issue. But, as the next chapter shows, they were nevertheless formative in the development of the legislative response.

²²¹ Jackson, *Maps of Meaning*, p. 88; Aitchison et al, *Leisure and Tourism Landscapes*, p. 51; Darby: *Landscape and Identity*, p. 9.

Chapter 4: Legislation and Integration: The Countryside (Scotland)

Act 1967 and its Aims and Objectives

‘One is a bit surprised that the country park concept had not been thought out in more detail before its inclusion in the countryside bill.’

*W. Copland, Nature Conservancy Council, 1968*¹

Introduction

This chapter centres on the short, but important, period between the ministerial announcement in November 1965, and the formal legislation of 1967-68 which gave it effect. The separate legal systems that operated in England & Wales, and in Scotland, meant that two separate legislative measures would be needed, and this provided an opportunity, if one were needed, for different provisions reflecting Scotland’s distinctive needs. However, it could also allow Scotland to follow a lead provided by its larger neighbour, perpetuating the criticism levelled by John Sheail that ‘Scotland has typically been treated as a footnote to the larger UK [landscape] history’.² Chapter 2 has shown that countryside recreation was far from the only issue on the Scottish agenda in the late 1960s, and this chapter explores the extent to which countryside legislation and policy, and the responsibilities assigned to CCS, meshed and dovetailed with other agencies, policies and interventions in this period. As the introduction indicates, the research for this chapter has focussed on the administrative record rather than the parliamentary debate or press coverage; but while these angles

¹ Kew: National Archives: Nature Conservancy Council Archive FT 3/278: memo from W. Copland in response to National Parks Commission policy papers, 18 June 1968.

² John Sheail, ‘The Countryside (Scotland) Act of 1967 Revisited’, *Scottish Geographical Journal*, 116.1 (2000), 25–40 (pp. 26, 35).

might reveal more in terms of political motivation, the administrative record should nevertheless show whether Scotland was treated as distinctively in the legislative process as the politicians claimed.

The statement and its aftermath

The ministerial statement announced two important measures. One was the provision of country parks, to address the recreational challenge without overburdening the public finances. The minister was evidently a cautious convert, stating that '[this] is not a time for spending public money on projects for leisure' and seeing the country park as essentially a low-cost, but nonetheless effective, measure.³ The parks would be created by local authorities, with government support, and would serve several recreational objectives, including tranquillity, play space, and watersports. There would be 'considerable flexibility' in the nature and the siting of these parks, and their purpose would be twofold: to reduce travel congestion caused by countryside recreation, and to concentrate gregarious outdoor activity in locations where it would not disturb other countryside interests. The idea – explicitly the centrepiece of this novel approach – would hopefully 'commend itself both to those who value solitude and those whose tastes are more social.'⁴

The second measure was the creation of Countryside Commissions, one for England & Wales and another for Scotland, which would have 'broad responsibility' for oversight of the government's countryside measures, for the encouragement of

³ 'The Countryside in 1970', *Proceedings 1965*, pp. 102-103.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 102.

recreational provision, and for research into demand and site management techniques.⁵ The commissions would have a rôle in the elimination of visual eyesores in the countryside, in improving access for walkers, and in providing for camping and caravanning.⁶ Scottish agencies, including the Saltire Society, APRS and NTS, welcomed this, which had after all been a key objective for NTS for some years.⁷

Welcome as these announcements were, however, a good deal of important detail remained unresolved. Critical, but undeveloped, issues in Scotland included the membership and powers of CCS, the availability of suitable land for the new provision, the finance available to develop and support country parks, the character and nature of the parks, the possibility that what Scotland needed might be distinctively different, and the relationship of CCS with other bodies, initiatives and policies. *Nature* picked up on the lack of clarity, asserting the need for ‘vigorous and comprehensive’ measures supported by adequate financial resource, which it characterised as ‘an acid test of [the government’s] sincerity’ on the countryside issue, while judging the proposals ‘ineffective and unworthy of serious positive discussion’.⁸ *Nature* feared that Willey’s proposed commissions would be much less powerful than the ‘Countryside in 1970’ had recommended, that the parks would suffer from the same pressures as the countryside they were intended to protect, and that the whole project

⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 102, 105.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 104.

⁷ Edinburgh: National Records of Scotland: Scottish Development Department Archive: DD12/3011: Letter APRS to Secretary of State, 19 November 1965; letter NTS to Secretary of State, 22 November 1965; Edinburgh: National Library of Scotland: Saltire Society Archive: ACC 9393/355: Conference Report: *The Scottish Landscape*, 1968.

⁸ ‘Conserving the National Heritage’, in *Nature*, 25 December 1965, pp. 1241–43.

failed to recognise its relationship to other policy initiatives such as on traffic, rural railway closures, or water supply policy.⁹

The SDD largely shared this view. In October 1965, they had expressed frustration with Willey's hesitancy over CCS' powers, leaving country parks as the only real substance of the ministerial announcement: 'this particular bandwagon is now so unexciting that we need not rush to jump on it'.¹⁰ Evidently the SDD saw an effective commission as the more important objective, while William Ross, the Secretary of State for Scotland, had expressed doubts in 1965 about the need for countryside recreation sites in Scotland altogether.¹¹ In this he was echoing Treasury views: 'the need in Scotland is...very different...the main English proposal for country parks would really not be appropriate to Scotland.'¹²

Scottish County Councils, on the other hand, found the ministerial vagueness more reassuring. They were concerned that the new commissions might place an additional layer of authority between themselves and the Scottish Office in relation to the countryside, so the absence of a commitment to executive powers was welcomed. The counties foresaw no problems over the land issue, perhaps anticipating that the proposals would allow them to utilise, or improve, their own landholdings.¹³ So most counties gave a cautious welcome to the new commission, though they doubted it was

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 1242.

¹⁰ Edinburgh: National Records of Scotland: Scottish Development Department Archive: DD12/3009: Internal memo from I. M. Robertson (SDD) to Secretary of State, 1 October 1965.

¹¹ Edinburgh: National Records of Scotland: Scottish Development Department Archive: DD12/3009: Discussion note, 10 August 1965. William 'Willie' Ross (1911-88) was a labour MP representing Kilmarnock for over thirty years. A firm unionist, he served as Secretary of State for Scotland from 1964-70 and again from 1974-76, in the two Wilson governments, and oversaw the establishment of CCS, the HIDB, and the Scottish Development Agency.

¹² Edinburgh: National Records of Scotland: Scottish Development Department Archive: DD12/2915: Letter N. McDermott, HM Treasury, to W. Ross, Secretary of State, 11 November 1965.

¹³ Kew: National Archives: Ministry of Land and Natural Resources Archive JH 9/2: Note by Mr Chilvers on meeting with Association of County Councils, 6 January 1966.

needed and would have preferred to exercise its rôle themselves. Perthshire stayed true to its tradition of resistance to interference in its countryside, insisting the need for CCS had been overstated.¹⁴ The Scottish counties pointed out that many authorities would effectively be providing for people other than their own ratepayers, arguing that this justified a higher level of financial support.¹⁵ They were also concerned about the implications of designation, and the idea that parks owned and managed by themselves would require CCS approval and accreditation.¹⁶ In contrast, the Scottish District Councils were disappointed to have been overlooked completely in consultation on the new countryside policy, and concerns that their powers in relation to rural areas were being subsumed by the counties led to a sharp exchange with the Secretary of State.¹⁷

The minister had wanted to issue a White Paper ahead of the 'Countryside in 1970' conference of 1965, to demonstrate that he, and not the countryside lobby, was leading on these issues, but he was prevented from doing so by Treasury objections.¹⁸ The work already done, however, meant that a White Paper could be published shortly after the ministerial announcement.¹⁹ Limited to England & Wales, it largely reiterated the position set out to the 'Countryside in 1970', reasserting the primacy of food

¹⁴ Edinburgh: National Records of Scotland: Association of County Councils in Scotland Archive: CO/1/5/954: Notes on meeting between Minister of State and representative bodies in Scotland, 18 February 1966; Sheail, 'The Countryside (Scotland) Act Revisited', p. 32.

¹⁵ Edinburgh: National Records of Scotland: Association of County Councils in Scotland Archive: CO/1/5/954: Notes on meeting between Minister of State and representative bodies in Scotland, 18 February 1966.

¹⁶ Edinburgh: National Records of Scotland: Association of County Councils in Scotland Archive: CO/1/5/1004: Letter from ACCS to Frank Tindall, 18 April 1969.

¹⁷ Edinburgh: National Records of Scotland: District Councils' Association Archive DC1/393: Letter from J. Campbell to Secretary of State, 21 April 1967, and subsequent correspondence.

¹⁸ Edinburgh: National Records of Scotland: Scottish Development Department Archive: DD 12/3009: Letter from Ministry of Land and Natural Resources to SDD, 17 September 1965; DD12/2915: Letter, F. Willey to H. W. Bowden (Lord President of the Council), 4 November 1965.

¹⁹ PP: Cmnd 2928: Ministry of Land and Natural Resources, *Leisure in the Countryside: England and Wales* (London, HMSO, 1966).

production ahead of other countryside demands.²⁰ Its major commitments were to the creation of a Countryside Commission, and the designation of country parks to expand the choice of countryside destination available to motorists, thus reducing congestion and pressure on scenic or working countryside. The parks would be provided primarily by county councils, but funding would be made available to other suitable providers. A subvention of up to 75% would be payable, and eligible expenditure could include land acquisition, infrastructure, and litter and ranger services; sports provision would be allowed in these spaces, but would not be fundable through this programme, and would require Sports Council liaison. Other intentions signposted in the White Paper included the wider use of access agreements for footpaths, measures to make inland water more accessible for recreation, the removal of environmental eyesores, and the provision of more facilities for camping and caravanning.²¹

None of this was especially unexpected; it had mostly been flagged up at the 'Countryside in 1970' the previous year. But the White Paper went no further in setting out the missing detail, and Richard Crossman, a senior minister in the Wilson government, believed that 'a whole number of important issues had been shirked'.²² Among Crossman's concerns was the lack of supporting data on demand, which he believed would better shape the policy, but he also raised the issue of powers, and the threat posed by modern farming methods, all of which were reasonable concerns

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 3.

²¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 4 - 14.

²² Richard Crossman, *The Diaries of a Cabinet Minister, Vol. 1* (London: Hamish Hamilton/Jonathan Cape, 1975), cited by Sheail, 'Leisure in the English Countryside', p. 78. Richard Crossman (1907-74) was a left-wing Labour MP who held ministerial posts in the Wilson administration, and later became Editor of the *New Statesman*. His three volumes of *Diaries*, published posthumously, were controversial, and the Government sought to prevent their publication. Jonathan Lynn claimed they had been a source for his highly successful TV series *Yes Minister*.

but which would significantly delay any intervention.²³ Willey however was unwilling to entertain any further delay, fearing that this might hand the initiative to the countryside lobby and put him on the back foot. His solution was to be non-committal. No decision was intimated about the powers of the new commissions, and although the grant proportion had been clarified, the government did not indicate the size of the available pot, the White Paper cautiously noting that the country's economic situation would be influential in deciding this; November 1967 also saw the Wilson government's devaluation of the pound by 14%, giving serious grounds for doubt over financing the proposals.²⁴ *The Guardian* believed that 'the whole measure will depend for its success on willingness to spend enough money on the things it makes possible.'²⁵ Sylvia Law, representing the Royal Town Planning Institute, was more dubious: 'limitations on finance are going to impose the greatest restraint on recreational developments in the countryside'.²⁶

Whilst the proposed subvention level of 75% seems generous in relation to modern levels of support, it was called into question at the time in Scotland. Frank Tindall, secretary of Study Group 9 (which was still meeting), drew attention to the inadequacy of this level of support in Wales, where similarly small local authorities had been unable to meet their obligations in potential national park projects.²⁷ Elsewhere, though, he

²³ Sheail, 'Leisure in the English Countryside', pp. 72, 78.

²⁴ PP: Cmnd. 2928: *Leisure in the Countryside*, p. 6.; 'The 1967 devaluation of the pound', National Archives Cabinet Papers, <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/cabinet-office-100/the-1967-devaluation-of-the-pound/> [accessed 26 September 2018]

²⁵ 'Cash for the Countryside' in *The Guardian*, 10 November 1967.

²⁶ Sylvia Law, 'Planning for Outdoor Recreation in the Countryside', *J. of Town Planning Institute*, 53 (1967), 383-386 (p. 386). Sylvia Law, OBE (1931-2004) was the first woman to be elected President of the RTPI, at the age of 43, and was an active member of CRRAG. She was a committed socialist who spent over twenty years working for the Greater London Council, primarily on open space and recreation issues. (Obituary, *The Times*, 14 April 2004)

²⁷ Frank Tindall, 'New Uses for our Heritage', in *The Scotsman*, 10 April 1967. Edinburgh: National Records of Scotland: Scottish Development Department Archive: DD12/3011: Letter, NTS to SDD, 22 February 1966.

welcomed the availability of finance to complement local authorities' existing, but unfunded, powers to create car parks and similar facilities.²⁸ The level of support has also been criticised as excessive by park historian Travis Elborough, who sees it as having damaged urban parks by redirecting funding towards the countryside, as well as by making countryside sites more appealing than they had previously been.²⁹ In Scotland at least, this is unfair; although the 25% subvention from local authorities had to come from an existing budget, it was not inevitable that support for urban parks was affected, especially since the urban and rural authorities were operating largely in isolation from one another before 1974.

As for the parks themselves, the White Paper was extraordinarily vague. They would vary in size (from 'small' to 'several hundreds of acres') and in the facilities offered, which could be quite basic but could include provision for play, water-based activities, or restaurants.³⁰ They might include sports facilities, but only if funded through the regional Sports Councils.³¹ The White Paper restated the intention of the parks, which were expected to reduce traffic congestion, ease pressure on scenic locations, and protect working countryside. It asserted that people 'ought to be able to spend their leisure in the country if they want to' but qualified this by insisting that such enjoyment should not be achieved to the detriment of countryside residents and businesses. It included access provisions, not least in respect of water and footpaths, and space for camping and caravanning, so it was not completely about containment even if some

²⁸ Edinburgh: National Library of Scotland: Saltire Society Archive: ACC 9393/355: Conference Report, *The Scottish Landscape*, 1968.

²⁹ Travis Elborough, *A Walk in the Park: The Life and Times of a People's Institution* (London: Jonathan Cape, 2016), pp. 311, 313.

³⁰ PP: Cmnd. 2928: *Leisure in the Countryside*, p. 6.

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 7.

of the access given was limited by provisos.³² It sought a 'fair balance' between the desire to visit and the needs of those living and working in the countryside, and the needs of conservation. But the tenor throughout the document is one of accommodating leisure and mitigating its consequences, rather than advancing it, a curiously muted position for a Labour government to adopt.³³ It is also clear that, notwithstanding the government's social-focussed inheritance from John Dower and Hobhouse, it was equally, if not more, concerned with production: 'the task of the farmers in producing food more efficiently...must not be made more difficult'.³⁴ To this end, and rather than challenging farming practices, the White Paper invited local authorities to plant trees and hedges to make good the losses caused by changes in agriculture, floating the possibility that farmers willing to accept tree-planting might be grant-aided for their generosity.³⁵

The White Paper omitted to indicate how the 'fair balance' would be brought about, and clearly also failed to convince national park activists, who saw few of their concerns over inappropriate use being addressed. Sylvia Sayer commented that 'the Bill...is bitterly disappointing...it appears to leave the [Dartmoor] National Park no better protected'.³⁶ Nor was there any clue as to what might distinguish these parks from other countryside provision. MLNR thinking in 1965 had offered examples such as Ashridge, a country estate in Hertfordshire, or the nearby Hatfield House, and something akin to a 'rural version of Kensington Gardens'.³⁷ Whether these examples

³² *Ibid.*, pp. 8, 11

³³ *Ibid.*, pp. 3-5.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 3.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, pp 12-13.

³⁶ Memo from Lady Sayer to Arthur Greenwood, November 1967, cited by Cherry, *Environmental Planning*, p. 139.

³⁷ Edinburgh: National Records of Scotland: Scottish Development Department Archive DD12/3009: Letter Ministry of Land and Natural Resources to SDD, 17 September 1965.

were familiar sites to the Scots is unclear, but a handwritten comment in Edinburgh endorsed this idea and urged its adoption in Scotland.³⁸ In other words, this would be provision along existing lines, and possibly using existing facilities.

The White Paper made neither commitment nor statement of intent as regards Scotland, although it clearly guided Scottish thinking.³⁹ The period leading up to the announcement had revealed serious differences in perspective between England and Scotland, with the English anxious to demonstrate political leadership and get ahead of the 'Countryside in 1970', while the Scottish Office wanted to wait for Study Group 9 to complete its recommendations, which it hoped to accept.⁴⁰ At this point, it was still possible that a different direction might be taken north of the border, and there was a desire that Scotland should not be led too strongly by its English counterpart, with Ross insisting that '[the drafters'] eyes should not be kept glued to the south.'⁴¹ But his initial position resisting country parks was reversed, and he insisted on reflecting this in the Scottish Bill: 'We foresee an immediate and growing demand particularly for the people of central Scotland'.⁴² The SDD was similarly enthusiastic, seeing country parks as 'very apposite' to Scotland, and especially on the East Lothian coast and along Loch Lomond: 'more and more a playground for Glasgow'.⁴³

³⁸ Edinburgh: National Records of Scotland: Scottish Development Department Archive DD12/3009: Handwritten note on letter from Ministry of Land and Natural Resources to SDD, 17 September 1965.

³⁹ Edinburgh: National Records of Scotland: Scottish Development Department Archive DD12/2951: Instructions to drafters, 19 October 1966.

⁴⁰ Edinburgh: National Records of Scotland: Scottish Development Department Archive: DD12/3009: Note from T. Lister (SDD) on meeting with Ministry of Land and Natural Resources, 10 May 1965.

⁴¹ Sheail, 'The Countryside (Scotland) Act Revisited', p. 33.

⁴² Edinburgh: National Records of Scotland: Scottish Development Department Archive: DD12/3029: Instructions to drafters from A. D. MacMillan, Solicitor at Scottish Office, 9 February 1967.

⁴³ Edinburgh: National Records of Scotland: Scottish Development Department Archive: DD12/3010: Undated (May 1966?) File note on establishment of CCS.

Meanwhile, Ross had already, in November 1965, committed to the establishment of a Countryside Commission for Scotland, although he reserved his position on the question of its powers.⁴⁴ Limited powers were trailed early in 1966 when SDD briefed local authorities on the new body, suggesting that CCS would be able to make by-laws, appoint rangers, and establish campsites, but little else.⁴⁵ Further clarification came in October 1966, when Ross determined on even more restricted capabilities, including a purely advisory role in planning matters. He proposed a grant allocation of just £50,000 for the first year of operation, rising to £200,000 in the third year.⁴⁶ This level of grant aid, clearly affected adversely by the financial constraints of the time, would seriously inhibit CCS' capacity to aid countryside projects, and would make it especially difficult to progress projects requiring land acquisition. Although the restriction of powers met the concerns of Scottish local authorities, the financial provision did not. Both Aberdeenshire and Midlothian expressed strong reservations about funding, with Aberdeenshire describing it as 'almost scandalous' that the government would not meet its share of the fiscal responsibility.⁴⁷

Progress in implementing the legislation was slow, and concern was raised in discussion between the Duke of Edinburgh and the minister in January 1967, as were the shortcomings in the White Paper compared with the conclusions reached by the 'Countryside in 1970'.⁴⁸ Discussion in England had been complicated, and delayed,

⁴⁴ Cherry, *Environmental Planning*, p. 150.

⁴⁵ Edinburgh: National Records of Scotland: District Councils' Association Archive DC1/396: letter from SDD to DCA, 10 February 1966, for discussion at meeting on 18 February 1966.

⁴⁶ Edinburgh: National Records of Scotland: Scottish Development Department Archive DD12/2951: Instructions to drafters, 10 November 1966.

⁴⁷ Edinburgh: National Records of Scotland: Association of County Councils of Scotland Archive: CO1/5/952: Letter, E. McAllister, Aberdeen County Council to ACCS, 18 July 1968; letter, J. Baillie, Midlothian County Council to ACCS, 23 July 1968.

⁴⁸ Kew: National Archives: Nature Conservancy Council Archive: FT 22/68: Briefing for Duke of Edinburgh for meeting with Mr Willey, January 1967.

by the hesitancy of the MLNR, and by a government reorganisation that moved countryside policy into the Ministry for Housing and Local Government (Crossman thereby inheriting the weaknesses he had identified in Willey's proposals), but the Scottish legislation was able to make more accelerated progress and found space in the legislative timetable earlier than its counterpart. This created an additional tension, namely the extent to which the Scottish Act might set a precedent for its English counterpart, especially as regards commission powers.⁴⁹ A different direction for Scotland had suddenly become much more problematic.

The legislation

The legislation that emerged reflected this. The aims of the two draft Bills were identical: the conservation and enhancement of natural beauty and amenity, and the provision of facilities for enjoyment of the countryside and for outdoor recreation.⁵⁰ This was a more positive approach than the White Paper had hinted at. The functions envisaged for the two commissions were similarly identical, and equally lacking in authority: both would be charged with keeping conservation, access and recreational facilities 'under review', but without powers other than recommendation, research, and pilot projects.⁵¹ Crucially, grant would be subject to ministerial approval, and neither commission would have direct control over its grant-in-aid budget; grant could be payable to public or non-public bodies, including the National Trusts in each jurisdiction.⁵² In both Acts, country parks were defined in terms of their purpose and

⁴⁹ Sheail, 'Leisure in the English Countryside', pp.79-80.

⁵⁰ PP: Countryside (Scotland) Act 1967, S.1.1; Countryside Act 1968, S. 1.1.

⁵¹ PP: Countryside (Scotland) Act 1967, S.3, S. 4, S.2.7; Countryside Act 1968, S. 2.2.

⁵² PP: Countryside (Scotland) Act 1967, S.7, S. 5.1; Countryside Act 1968, S. 2.9, S.7.

location relative to urban areas, but not as to their landscape, size, visitor offer or any other characteristic.⁵³ The two Acts emerged as almost identical both in provision and in limitation, so to claim, as the Scottish Secretary did, that the Scottish Act was ‘designed for Scotland’ was utterly disingenuous.⁵⁴

There were some differences, nevertheless, and these are interesting. The Scottish commission would need to delimit itself geographically, drawing up maps to show what constituted ‘countryside’ in Scotland.⁵⁵ Apparently, no such problem of definition existed in England & Wales. Scottish local authorities were given a duty to assess the need for country parks for their residents both within and beyond their boundaries, and could collaborate in creating parks.⁵⁶ These provisions were also absent from the English legislation. Scottish country parks should be conveniently located to major concentrations of population, while English authorities would have regard to the proximity of built-up areas and to existing provision.⁵⁷ The Scottish legislation also addressed an existing anomaly, giving countryside-related powers already available to English councils to their Scottish equivalents.⁵⁸ The provisions for collaboration in the Scottish Act sought to recognise the difficult position of small local authorities, allowing them to share the burden of expenditure, while the freedom to define its countryside would permit CCS to work across as broad a geographical base as it wished. But the Act created additional obligations for Scottish authorities, including

⁵³ PP: Countryside (Scotland) Act 1967, S.48.1; Countryside Act 1968, S. 7.1.

⁵⁴ PP: House of Commons, Standing Committees, Official Report Session 1966-67, Vol XII, p 6-14. Speech, J. Dickson Mabon to Scottish Grand Committee, 18th April 1967.

⁵⁵ PP: Countryside (Scotland) Act 1967, S. 2.2, S. 2.8.

⁵⁶ PP: Countryside (Scotland) Act 1967, S. 48.4, S. 48.5, S. 48.7; Countryside Act 1968 S. 6.3, S. 6.4.

⁵⁷ PP: Countryside (Scotland) Act 1967, S. 48.1; Countryside Act 1968, S. 6.1.

⁵⁸ PP: Countryside (Scotland) Act 1967, S. 54.2, S.56, S. 65. Edinburgh: Scottish Development Department Archive: DD12/3030: Notes on establishment of CCS, 11 February 1966.

the appraisal of existing supply and demand, and the convenience requirement suggested that councils in remoter areas might not meet the grant criteria.

The legislation provided for CCS to be constituted with up to 14 members appointed by the Secretary of State. Both the counties and the district councils sought representation, and put forward recommendations in this respect, but were ignored.⁵⁹

The SDD appointed Sir John McWilliam, the Lord Lieutenant of Fife, as CCS' first Chairman, supported by two landowners, four council representatives (though not the ones suggested by the authorities themselves) and an arcane group of others, including a suburban councillor from East Dunbartonshire, the chairman of the Scottish Daily Express, a planning specialist from Glasgow College of Art, and a member of an Ayrshire co-operative society. The Tourist Board had two people to speak on its behalf, the Forestry Commission one, and several members combined their participation in CCS with similar committee rôles elsewhere. In this way, the Nature Conservancy, HIDB, Red Deer Commission and mountaineering interests were all indirectly represented. Just two members were women, while five were members of gentlemen's clubs in London or Scotland.⁶⁰ When these appointments were reviewed in 1971, the SDD admitted that it had failed to consult on them, and noted that the chairman had been ineffective, one appointee had not attended meetings, and another had made no contribution whatsoever to discussion.⁶¹ This was not an auspicious start.

⁵⁹ Edinburgh: National Records of Scotland: District Councils' Association Archive DC1/396; letter to I. M. Robertson, SDD, 30 December 1965. DC1/478, undated briefing note on membership of CCS; Association of County Councils of Scotland Archive CO1/5/954: letter ACCS to SDD, 17 November 1967.

⁶⁰ *Who's Who* 119 (London, A & C. Black, 1967)

⁶¹ Edinburgh: National Records of Scotland: Scottish Development Department Archive: DD12/3347: Handwritten note, K. Gillender, 28 October 1971.

A 1966 review of the 'Countryside in 1970' characterised it as a 'strong, remarkably united and lively movement...free from sectional bias'.⁶² This was undiluted overstatement. Integration was not reflected either in the White Paper or in the legislation, which instead perpetuated fragmentation of activity and the possibility, even likelihood, of conflicting priorities and overlapping objectives. This is especially noticeable in Scotland, where entirely foreseeable overlaps of responsibility in relation to the parks were largely ignored. Sport was administered by the Scottish Education Dept. (SED), through the regional Sports Council, while recreation fell under the aegis of the Scottish Home Department and later the SDD. Heritage issues in Scotland were divided between the SDD's Ancient Monuments Branch and its Historic Buildings Commission, with the NTS and the Scottish Royal Fine Arts Commission (RFACS) also taking an active interest. In economic development, CCS would have territorial issues to resolve with the Highlands and Islands Development Board (HIDB) and the FC. And, as environmental historian Matthew Kelly points out, the legislation made no provision for the environment, nor did it direct the future relationship of CCS with the Nature Conservancy; these were matters that CCS would have to address later.⁶³ Coppock and Duffield argue that Scotland thus suffered from conflicting and even contradictory approaches to recreational land use, with little consistency between government departments and agencies, leading to a confused overall outcome.⁶⁴ Study Group 9 had hoped that the new commission would play a part in bringing different interests together, with Cairngorm as an obvious potential beneficiary: 'exactly the kind of area that the Countryside Commission [*sic*] would have to help

⁶² Nicholson, 'The Countryside in 1970 Conferences', p. 128.

⁶³ Kelly, 'Conventional Thinking', p. 122.

⁶⁴ Coppock and Duffield, *Spatial Analysis*, p. 124.

manage, to integrate finance and expertise in collaboration with County Council and planning staffs'.⁶⁵ As with many of their suggestions, though, they were content to let the Commission find its own way to this utopian state, and fragmentation was to remain an issue throughout the country park era.

On a wider strategic front, there was limited evidence of integration with other significant policy initiatives. Scotland's approach to tourism could clearly have implications for visitor numbers at scenic locations, and country parks might have addressed tourists' recreational needs as well as those of townspeople, but this was not managed at a strategic level. It was left instead to local authorities to integrate tourism into their local Development Plans; predictably, East Lothian did so enthusiastically, while Perthshire did not.⁶⁶ Tony Travis pointed out that 'the evident need is to manage and plan [tourism] developments on an integrated basis... [so that] resources are tied together.'⁶⁷ Neither the need, nor its evident nature, were universally acknowledged, however.

Similarly, Scotland's housing policy was changing both the concentration of population and the nature of public housing, but this was not taken up in any consideration of the countryside. In fact, housing policy suffered from fragmentation too, and the historian Eric Gillett describes the analysis underpinning the 1977 Scottish Green Paper on housing, for example, as 'started and finished as a departmental review', with little input from beyond the team that drafted its radical proposals.⁶⁸ This was a time,

⁶⁵ T. Weir, 'The Scottish Countryside in 1967', p. 312. Weir was a member of Study Group 9.

⁶⁶ Holdaway, 'The Country Park', p. 116.

⁶⁷ A. S. Travis, *A Strategic Appraisal of Scottish Tourism: An Assessment of Resource Potential* (Edinburgh: Scottish Tourist Board, 1974), p. 40.

⁶⁸ Eric Gillett, *Investment in the Environment: Recent Housing, Planning and Transport Policies in Scotland* (Aberdeen: Aberdeen University Press, 1983), p. 14.

though, when integration of policies was unusual. The first real attempt at strategic integration in Scotland only came through the 1975 requirement for regional councils to draw up structure plans, linked to their economic, social and environmental priorities, and although this was welcomed and had some success, demarcation within public policy remained a problem into the 1990s.⁶⁹ When SNH superseded CCS in 1992, one of their earliest publications reviewed the hindrance fragmentation of responsibility was causing in the delivery of effective and equitable recreation provision in Scotland.⁷⁰ Around the same time, the Scottish Office concluded that 'tackling rural issues in a sectoral manner does not work', and began to think in more strategically-integrated ways.⁷¹

Collaboration would therefore not derive from strategic oversight, but instead from the capacity of individual personalities to co-operate informally. CCS was fortunate that the Chairman of the HIDB, Bob Grieve, was an enthusiastic supporter of the new commission from his Study Group 9 days, and was sufficiently highly regarded to expect co-operation from the new commissioners, even across organisational boundaries. The NTS would naturally be an enthusiastic partner agency, having supported the CCS concept for many years. But the lack of clarity created difficulties of confidence elsewhere, not least for the Carnegie Trust which was represented on CCS, but which expressed caution about partnering with a government that might prove unreliable.⁷²

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 61-64.

⁷⁰ Scottish Natural Heritage, *Enjoying the Outdoors: A Programme for Action* (Perth: Scottish Natural Heritage, 1994).

⁷¹ *Rural Framework* (1992), cited by Warren, *Managing Scotland's Environment*, p. 37.

⁷² Edinburgh: National Records of Scotland: Carnegie Trust Archive GD 281/136/1/6/1: Minutes of Executive Committee, 6 December 1967 and 7 March 1968.

Conclusion

This chapter has demonstrated that, whatever the politicians may have claimed at the time, the idea that the Countryside (Scotland) Act 1967 was tailored to Scottish needs and aspirations was no more than propaganda. The possibility of a distinctively Scottish approach had nevertheless clearly existed in the early drafting stages. The Secretary of State himself, in announcing the creation of CCS in November 1965, identified a list of issues that would justify a distinctive approach for Scotland, and clearly stated that England's problems of conservation were not reflected in Scotland, where the principal challenge would be 'positive, forward-looking development'.⁷³ This was reinforced in writing, with an SDD assurance that CCS' work would be 'fixed to suit Scotland's distinctive needs'.⁷⁴ In the event, this commitment was steadily eroded through the process, until only the propaganda remained; any genuine distinctiveness would have to be distilled by CCS and the SDD from within an overall legislative framework shared with the rest of the UK, and based on containment rather than active development. Yet in other areas of policy, Scottish distinctiveness could be recognised, as in the Tenants' Rights etc. (Scotland) Act 1980, which made important changes to housing policy in Scotland without mirroring the provisions in the corresponding English Act.⁷⁵ The White Paper on Scottish Roads similarly argued that improvements to Scotland's communications system should not be subject to the

⁷³ Edinburgh: National Records of Scotland: Scottish Development Department Archive DD12/3010: Briefing paper for Secretary of State's announcement, 17 November 1965.

⁷⁴ Edinburgh: National Records of Scotland: Scottish Development Department Archive DD12/3010: Letter, SDD to local planning authorities, 17 November 1965.

⁷⁵ Gillett, *Investment*, pp. 38–39.

same cost-benefit analysis as in England.⁷⁶ This failure to tailor policy to its context has been largely overlooked by recreation historians.

Far from being distinctive, therefore, the Scottish country park legislation was profoundly influenced by English political expediency. Instead of taking forward his original intention of promoting tourism and associated economic development, Ross chose to accept the Anglo-centred argument of containment and defensive measures. And rather than adopt what seems an eminently sensible approach encouraged by Crossman, Willey was more concerned to demonstrate his leadership on the countryside issue and to defuse the 'Countryside in 1970'. As a result, the policy was announced with little other than anecdotal supporting evidence and the alarmist predictions first championed by Dower – who had himself recommended further analysis of the recreation challenge as the logical next step.⁷⁷ The vagaries of the legislative timetable, which allowed a Scottish bill to emerge first, also imposed its own issues, in that (whatever the overriding priorities for Scotland might be) the Scottish legislation could not be allowed to set any precedent for its English counterpart. Cherry allows Ross' assertions of CCS responsiveness to Scotland's distinctive needs, and of inter-agency co-operation in Scotland, to pass unchallenged, but neither claim had any merit in reality.⁷⁸ The requirement for the Scottish Bill to be subservient to that for England & Wales dismissed any possibility of a distinctive approach for Scotland. It is especially interesting to note Ross' original contention that country parks might not be appropriate for Scotland. Ross' *volte-face* on this issue was clearly fundamental to the direction taken in Scotland, and had a strong political dimension,

⁷⁶ PP: Cmnd. 3953: *Scottish Roads in the 1970s*; Gillett, *Investment*, pp. 93, 97-98.

⁷⁷ Dower, 'Fourth Wave', p. 189.

⁷⁸ Cherry, *Environmental Planning*, p. 150.

to which Cherry draws attention in the desire of the new Labour government to prove its countryside credentials. Willey, he noted, had insisted on a 'more comprehensive and ambitious countryside policy' to address the shortcomings of the 1949 legislation.⁷⁹ He also started out with the intention of giving meaningful powers to the commissions, but dropped these ideas as the process moved forward.⁸⁰ Fry describes Ross as an avid promoter of the Scottish interest, anxious to ensure that Scotland benefitted appropriately from any new countryside initiative. The nationalist threat to the narrow majority enjoyed by the Wilson government created further pressures, and Fry points out that Ross, who despised the SNP, was acutely aware of the threat they represented to Labour.⁸¹

Sheail emphasises Ross' determination to see Scotland get its fair share of government finance; Scotland's rejection of national parks in 1949 had cost it seventeen years of central government funding for recreation.⁸² Fry is less charitable, accusing Ross of profligacy, and suggesting that the desire for visible spending in Scotland may have outweighed the justification for the spend.⁸³ Certainly, other initiatives, such as the ambitious Glasgow motorway project begun in 1965, convey a similar sense of a need to appear even-handed with spending in England.⁸⁴ As far as country parks were concerned, the decision seems to have been at least as much

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 133. Willey's comment came in a speech, in June 1965, to the Conference of Park Planning Authorities in Harrogate.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 136-137.

⁸¹ Fry, *Patronage and Principle*, p. 229.

⁸² Sheail, *Leisure in the English Countryside*, p. 79; Edinburgh: National Records of Scotland: Scottish Development Department Archive: DD12/2987: Memo, R.F. Butler, 16 June 1966; briefing for Secretary of State's response to Parliamentary Question, 17 November 1965.

⁸³ Fry, *Patronage and Principle*, p. 230

⁸⁴ Harvie, *No Gods*, p. 145. Harvie also points out that the contemporaneous Edinburgh motorway project received stronger challenge from the environmental lobby, which led to it being shelved.

based on an idea of equitable funding for Scotland as on any notion of demand that might have been claimed at the time.

Ross' other major countryside-related decision was to make CCS essentially an advisory body, with virtually no powers of its own. Even as regards its centrepiece policy, the country park, it could only recommend funding, having no control over the grant-in-aid allocation. Local authority co-operation was therefore essential, but could only be assured if the counties were placated over the question of their continued autonomy in countryside planning, and over their own public open space. Their resistance to the possibility of a new agency intervening in the hierarchy between themselves and the Scottish Office effectively negated the possibility of meaningful executive powers for CCS. As a purely advisory body, it posed little threat to existing hegemonies but was denied the opportunity to be a powerful agent of change in the countryside.

The appointments made to the new commission reflect this; they perpetuated existing established interests in the countryside – landowning, farming, forestry – and although recreation was also represented, it was the established recreational interests that were best covered: field sports, mountaineering, youth hostelling and organised sports. The implication was that CCS would essentially seek to contain, rather than to advance opportunities for, the newer and more inclusive forms of recreation that were threatening more established countryside land uses.

Of the six issues raised by the legislative process for Scotland, only two – the powers and membership of the new commissions, and the possibility of a different direction for Scotland – had thus been fully addressed before CCS began its work. The finance question still depended on the extent to which the government was prepared to

support the policy, and the willingness of local authorities to take up the opportunity, but since there was still no assessment of either supply or demand, this could only emerge during implementation. The size of the allocation also remained uncertain, although it was clearly going to be less than had been originally hoped for, and perhaps less than was needed to make the policy effective. Local authorities had provided some reassurance on the land availability issue, but it remained to be seen whether the land on offer would meet the requirements of convenience in relation to population centres, or whether councils would now be willing to employ hitherto underused powers to acquire land and allocate it for recreational purposes.⁸⁵ And of vital importance, there was still considerable doubt over the type of provision envisaged in a 'country park', including such fundamental questions as the likely size of the new parks, their ownership and management arrangements, and their content and offer to visitors. Early discussions in the SDD had mentioned the possibilities of Craigtoun (Fife), Balloch (Loch Lomondside) and Strathclyde (Lanarkshire), and drafters were also alert to the possibilities of privately-owned sites including Culzean and Hopetoun, but these potentially helpful thoughts were never made public.⁸⁶ So uncertainty remained: a plea for clarity from Scottish legislative drafters included the phrase: 'once you have decided precisely what is wanted...'.⁸⁷ Chapter 8 demonstrates the scale of the difficulties this vagueness caused to applicants, as did an SDD consultation with the counties in 1968: in their responses, Renfrewshire sought clarification on what a country park was expected to provide, while Aberdeenshire wondered for whom the

⁸⁵ J. T. Coppock, 'The Countryside (Scotland) Act and the Geographer', *Scottish Geographical Magazine*, 84.3 (1968), 201–11 (p. 207).

⁸⁶ Edinburgh: National Records of Scotland: Scottish Development Department Archive DD12/3030: Notes for drafters, 13 April 1967.

⁸⁷ Edinburgh: National Records of Scotland: Scottish Development Department Archive DD12/2951: Notes for drafters, 4 January 1967.

parks were intended.⁸⁸ These were fundamental questions that demanded, but had yet to receive, a meaningful response; the resolution, if any, of these issues would emerge more clearly during implementation.

⁸⁸ Edinburgh: National Records of Scotland: Association of County Councils of Scotland Archive: CO1/5/952: Letter, C. Ross, Renfrew County Council, to ACCS, 1 August 1968; letters, E. McAllister, Aberdeen County Council to ACCS, 18 July 1968 and 30 June 1969.

Chapter 5: The Triumph of Pragmatism: The evolution of Scottish country park policy in the 1970s and 1980s

'The situation in Aberdeen is difficult to relate to an overall policy, as there appears to be no concise written statement of the intentions of the bodies concerned with the provision of facilities.'

William Taylor, Planning Officer, Aberdeen City Council, 1977¹

Introduction

As the previous chapter has shown, CCS began its existence with several fundamental questions regarding country parks waiting to be answered. This chapter explores the organisation's attempts to bring clarity to its responsibilities, and how policy evolved over time as the practical realities of delivery became apparent, moving on from an initial, essentially negative, philosophy of containment towards a more positive embracing of outdoor recreation as a force for good, with country parks having a clearer role within a more structured provision of space.

CCS had a lifespan of 24 years, from 1968 to 1992. Chronologically, this divides conveniently into three episodes: the first, up to 1975, where the organisation's work was characterised by its need for definition and clarity as the opportunity was offered to somewhat reluctant local authorities, and a second, lasting from 1975 to 1985, where the combination of a reorganisation of local government in Scotland, a more systematic approach from CCS, and a rethinking of recreational priorities combined to

¹ William Taylor, 'Country Park Provision', p. 31.

secure more active implementation and a more considered approach to provision. A third episode, from 1985 to 1992, can best be characterised as a period of stagnation, when few new initiatives were taken forward, and potential applicants found access to funding more difficult. These episodes are quite different from those suggested by Lambert or Veal, and are chronological in nature rather than thematic; policy change in Scotland is less demarcated than the English scholars' approach might suggest.² The chapter is structured in line with these chronological periods, and traces the evolution of policy beyond a simplistic desire to cater for outdoor recreation and into more diverse areas such as environmental protection and heritage conservation, whilst also highlighting some of the issues faced by CCS in defining its responsibilities and boundaries, and in dealing with the detail of park provision. It explores several key policy issues that arose during the implementation period, and discusses how, and to what extent, CCS responded to each of these. It concludes by considering the forces that shaped CCS' work during its lifetime, with the organisation substantially hindered by impositions placed upon it, but also by its own approach, and especially the inconsistency with which it approached policy and eligibility.

The chapter provides a narrative overview of the evolution of country park policy in response to practical issues of delivery, resource and opportunity. It does so largely from a strategic viewpoint, with individual sites mentioned only to illustrate more general points, or to highlight departures from established policies. Elaboration of the process leading to park designation (or otherwise) at specific sites is provided by the case studies in Chapters 6 – 8.

² Lambert, *History of the Country Park*, pp. 49-53; Veal, *Planning for Leisure*, p 87.

Optimism and reality, 1968 - 74

At CCS' first meeting in April 1968, its chairman read out a message from the Secretary of State affirming that 'the establishment of [CCS] ...demonstrates the government's determination not only that Scotland should move towards the realisation of its great recreational potential, but also that, in the process, it will retain all that is best in the beauty and unique character of our countryside.'³ This established at the outset the tightrope CCS would be expected to walk, satisfying the demand for recreation, and by implication realising its economic potential as well, but also ensuring that scenic quality was not compromised in the process. In essence, responsibility for the intractable problem identified by Study Group 9 was now being handed over, unresolved, to CCS. And to make the task even more challenging, the minister added that financial stringency would inevitably slow progress; CCS' formation coincided with Harold Wilson's devaluation of the pound and a need to curtail public expenditure to increase market confidence.⁴ CCS' role was to be a responsive one, with no direct control over limited funding, and no powers of consequence; it thus inherited the full package of difficult issues in the countryside, but without the capacity (or the resource) to resolve them directly.

CCS' first responsibility was to define the geographical area eligible for countryside grants and in which the creation of country parks would occur. It concluded that 98%

³ Edinburgh: National Records of Scotland: Countryside Commission for Scotland Archive CCS3/1: Annex A, minutes of CCS meeting 8 April 1968.

⁴ Edinburgh: National Records of Scotland: Countryside Commission for Scotland Archive CCS3/1: Annex A, minutes of CCS meeting 8 April 1968; Scott Newton, 'The Sterling Devaluation of 1967, the International Economy and Post-War Social Democracy', *English Historical Review*, Vol. CXXV no. 515, pp. 912-945 (pp. 918, 943)

of land in Scotland could be defined as 'countryside'.⁵ Major built-up areas were excluded, apart from 'extensive areas of a rural character or suitable for open-air recreation' within them, which would be allowed exceptionally.⁶ The definition was not consistent in application, however; Holyrood Park, a 260 ha site on the eastern edge of Edinburgh, was excluded, but the 146 ha Pollok estate was apparently within the countryside in spite of being surrounded by urban south Glasgow.⁷ It also proved negotiable in practice, as when the boundary of 'countryside' was moved to accommodate the creation of Calderglen Country Park at East Kilbride in 1980.⁸ The boundaries of this countryside were never redrawn to reflect subsequent urban and suburban development, some of it significant and relevant to the siting of new facilities, so a large industrial and commercial development which began in 1970 at Altens, south of Aberdeen, was still considered countryside land in 1989.⁹ And although the definition was intended to clarify eligibility for grant aid, it was characterised from the outset by uncertainty and inconsistency at the detail level, as illustrated in one of the maps that survives, for Aberdeen, shown below:

⁵ Thomas Huxley, 'The Countryside Commission for Scotland's Work in the Countryside Around Towns of Scotland', in A. B. Cruikshank (ed.) *Where Town Meets Country: Problems of Peri-urban Areas in Scotland* (Aberdeen: Aberdeen University Press, 1982), pp 13-20 (p. 15).

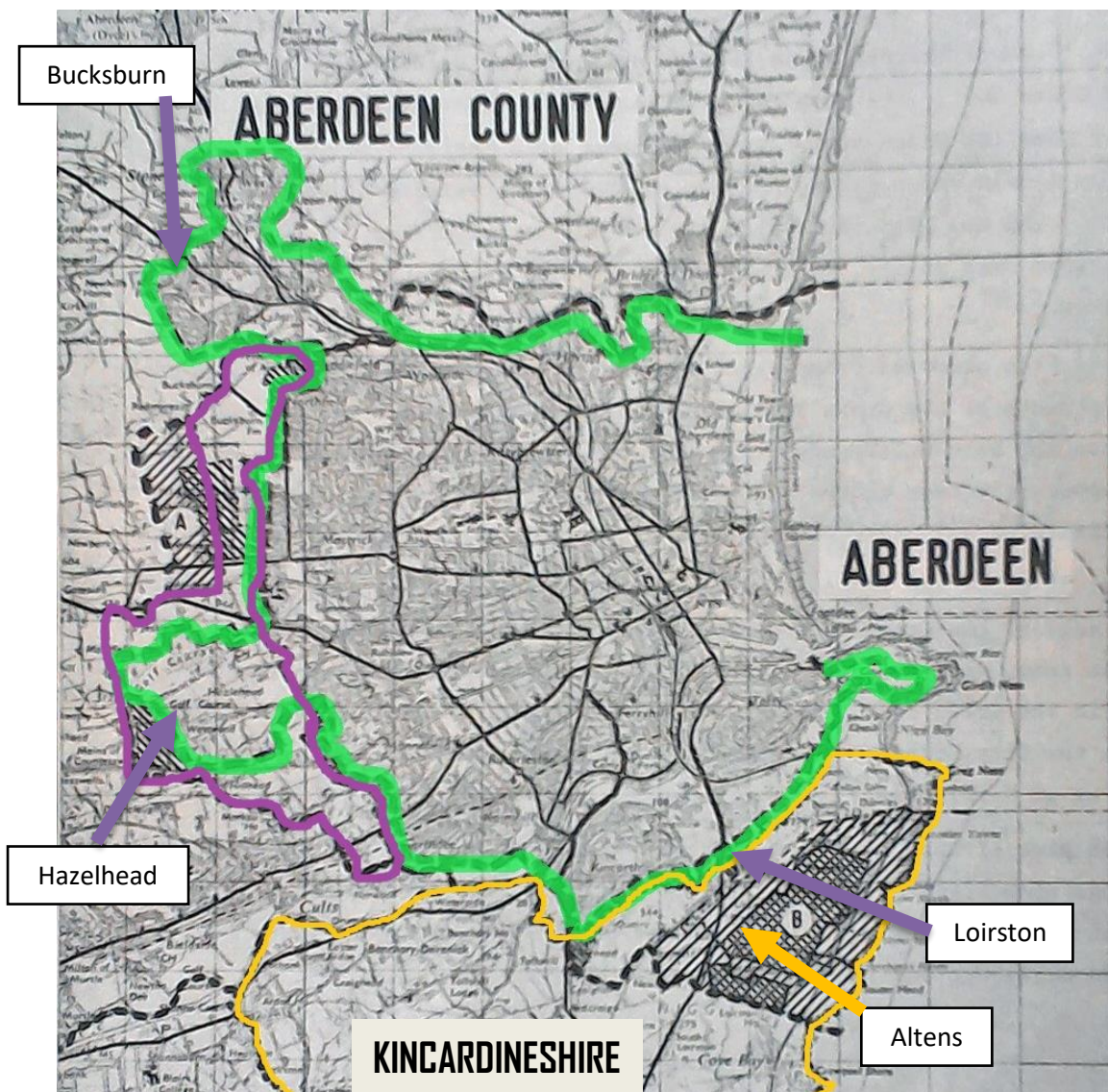
⁶ Edinburgh: National Records of Scotland: Countryside Commission for Scotland Archive CCS3/1: SDD note appended to minutes of CCS meeting 8 April 1968.

⁷ Edinburgh: National Records of Scotland: Countryside Commission for Scotland Archive CCS 6/1: Paper by T Huxley to Resource Management and Projects Committee, 27 May 1969; CCS3/17: Minutes of CCS meeting 9 September 1980.

⁸ Edinburgh: National Records of Scotland: Countryside Commission for Scotland Archive CCS3/17: Minutes of meeting 13 May 1980. This also happened again, in 1986 at Balloch, though not in relation to the country park (CCS3/28, papers for meeting 8 July 1986).

⁹ Taylor, 'Country Park Provision', p. 36; Edinburgh: National Records of Scotland, Countryside Commission for Scotland Archive CCS3/33: Minutes of meeting 11 April 1989.

Fig. 5.1: Map showing boundary of defined 'countryside' in Aberdeen area



Source: D. N. Skinner: *A Situation Report on Green Belts in Scotland* (Perth, CCS, 1976), Map 12, with explanatory labelling added. The line in green shows the boundary of defined 'countryside' as agreed in 1968, while the yellow line is the boundary of the Aberdeen/Kincardineshire Green Belt agreed in 1957. The purple line delineates the green belt established with Aberdeenshire in 1973, but recognised informally from 1968.¹⁰

¹⁰ Huxley, 'The Countryside Commission for Scotland's Work', p. 15.

The built-up area of the city of Aberdeen was excluded from the 'countryside', as was the suburb of Bucksburn.¹¹ In the south, the boundary of the 'countryside' followed the city limit quite closely, placing Loirston, for example (chapter 8), within the area eligible for grant despite its proximity to the city. But an important exception west of Aberdeen was the large open space at Hazelhead, which incorporated sports facilities such as golf and equestrianism, park elements including a pond and a café, and extensive countryside, with woodland and trails. This was made ineligible for grant, even though Hazelhead had many similarities to what would later become country parks, was ideally located for easy access from the city, and was already a popular countryside site.¹²

The designated countryside boundaries were not wholly contiguous with the designated green belt. Small areas of peri-urban land excluded from the green belt were included in the 'countryside', and when the western edge green belt was agreed between Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire in 1973, Hazelhead was included within it, producing an anomalous situation where green space within the green belt was not considered countryside. Even something as apparently straightforward as the definition of 'countryside' generated significant difficulties in practical application, and especially on the urban fringe, which CCS struggled to resolve satisfactorily.

This was illustrated further through early discussions with Arthur Oldham, of Glasgow City Council, who was actively exploring several urban fringe sites for country park designation. Oldham argued that, since urban residents were the intended beneficiaries of the legislation (and since urban authorities were part-funding the

¹¹ D.N. Skinner, *Situation Report on Green Belts*, Map 12.

¹² Pers. Comm. Carolyn Findlay, former Aberdeen resident and Hazelhead stable assistant in the 1960s.

provision), CCS should prioritise urban authorities' preferences. CCS, however, was unsure that such sites met the 'rural character' requirement.¹³ The absence of a definitive policy on location was an embarrassment, with Huxley commenting 'we must press on with clearing the country parks paper...it is becoming desperately difficult that this is not available'.¹⁴ A year later, though, things were still vague, and a CCS commissioner was able to assert at a conference that, while the Scottish Act required country parks to be located close to the urban population, parks in remoter areas would also be in keeping with the spirit of the legislation.¹⁵ In the end, the formal policy emphasised the importance of proximity to population centres, and required the parks to be accessible both on foot and by motor vehicle.¹⁶ This accorded with the SDD's view that country parks would be primarily urban fringe sites, and with its subsequent evidence to the Select Committee on Scottish Affairs in 1971 (by which time two sites, both deeply rural, had been approved).¹⁷ But in a discussion of Camperdown, a fringe site near Dundee, the following year, CCS concluded that this was an urban park and therefore ineligible for grant.¹⁸ It was all very confusing, not least for potential applicants.

A further priority facing the new commission was to define what types of facility would be eligible for funding. This had been kept vague throughout the development of the

¹³ Edinburgh: National Records of Scotland: Scottish Development Department Archive DD12/3456: Minutes of meeting with SDD, CCS, Glasgow City Council, 8 October 1969.

¹⁴ Edinburgh: National Records of Scotland: Scottish Development Department Archive DD12/3456: T. Huxley: Notes after meeting with SDD, CCS, Glasgow City Council, 8 October 1969.

¹⁵ B.K. Parnell, 'The Location and Function of Country Parks', in B.K. Parnell, Elisabeth Beazley, and Thomas Huxley (eds), 'Symposium on Country Parks' (Unpublished report, Institute of Landscape Architects, 1970), pp. 1–7 (p. 6).

¹⁶ Edinburgh: National Records of Scotland: Countryside Commission for Scotland Archive CCS3/6: 'Policy on Country Parks for Scotland', March 1970, p. 1.

¹⁷ Edinburgh: National Records of Scotland: Scottish Development Department Archive DD12/3456: File note by A S Neilson, SDD, 7 December 1971.

¹⁸ Edinburgh: National Records of Scotland: Scottish Development Department Archive DD12/3456: File note by A S Neilson, SDD, 7 April 1972.

legislation, but the page was not completely blank, since the Scottish Act had included this definition:

*A country park is a park or pleasure ground in the countryside which by reason of its position in relation to major concentrations of population affords convenient opportunities to the public for enjoyment of the countryside or open-air recreation.*¹⁹

The wording offered some clues: provision would be in the countryside, conveniently located for urban populations, and with provision for either passive enjoyment or active outdoor exercise. The legislation also made clear that local authorities would be the principal providers, either singly or collaboratively, but made grant aid available to other public and non-public bodies as well.²⁰ But it did not indicate what type of provision would be sought, its likely size, the facilities to be provided, or its accessibility for the people it intended to serve, and this continuing imprecision allowed a wide interpretation among early applicants.

The SDD issued a circular in 1967 stressing that country parks were one of the most important provisions of the new legislation, and urged local authorities to prompt action. They reminded councils of their duty to assess local need, and encouraged rural authorities to co-operate with their urban counterparts to provide for the latter's countryside recreation demand, suggesting that parks could range widely in size and scale, from spaces with basic visitor facilities up to large sites with restaurants, boating, swimming and outdoor games areas.²¹ This was clearly jumping the gun; the SDD

¹⁹ PP: Countryside (Scotland) Act 1967, S. 48.1

²⁰ PP: Countryside (Scotland) Act 1967, S. 48.2 – S48.8; S. 7.

²¹ Edinburgh: National Records of Scotland: Scottish Development Department Circular 75/1967.

was promoting an idea which had yet to be properly defined, and the circular encouraged a diverse and largely inappropriate range of applications, wasting time and resource in local authorities and putting unnecessary pressure on CCS as it sought to establish its work programme and recruit staff.

In England, meanwhile, the National Parks Commission (NPC) had been working on a more precise understanding, and published five papers on country park matters in 1968, which formed the basis for early discussion between the two new commissions to try and standardise their approach.²² The NPC aimed for a size of at least 25 acres (10 ha), managed as a single entity, and provided with at the very least a car park, toilets and a ranger service. A country park should be easily accessible, would provide for large numbers of users, free of charge, and recognised through designation.²³ CCS agreed that a uniform approach was sensible, but thought a smaller size requirement might better reflect both the smaller populations of Scottish urban areas and (more relevantly) the limited financial capacity of Scottish councils.²⁴ It accepted the principle of management as a single entity, allowed for the possibility that some parks might not be easily accessible, and accepted the possibilities of restrictions on access and entry charges in some circumstances. CCS also affirmed that a 'country park' would be different from a town park in its character, other than perhaps in the

²² Edinburgh: National Records of Scotland: Countryside Commission for Scotland Archive CCS3/1: Minutes of CCS meeting 29 July 1968.

²³ Edinburgh: National Records of Scotland: Countryside Commission for Scotland Archive CCS3/1: Paper by R. Hookway of NPC, discussed at meeting 29 July 1968.

²⁴ Edinburgh: National Records of Scotland: Countryside Commission for Scotland Archive CCS3/6: Minutes of CCS Management and Projects Committee, 26 August 1968.

provision of equipped play space for children – another issue on which guidance had yet to be provided.²⁵

CCS' first Annual Report, published in 1968, refined this approach by stating that the country park would be a 'designation of function' rather than of quality or type of landscape (provided the site retained a rural character), opening up the possibility that a variety of landscapes and purposes would be entertained for grant. It also introduced the prospect of facilities for overnight campers and caravanners being included in country parks, and stated an intention to apply designation strategically, rather than simply granting it to any site meeting the criteria.²⁶ A draft policy was agreed with SDD in 1969, and formalised in 1970, asserting the primacy of recreation on these sites but allowing for other land uses (specifically agriculture and forestry, the presence of which would support public education on these land uses), and expecting the parks to provide 'a variety of convenient areas in which people can enjoy a wide range of open-air leisure pursuits, both active and passive, with or without charge' as well as contributing to 'a better understanding of the need for conservation'.²⁷ Unified management of the site would be essential, but the size issue was fudged.²⁸ Facilities would need to include, as a minimum, toilets, car parking, litter collection, countryside rangers, and an information service.²⁹ The policy also referred to 'meeting the demand for countryside recreation facilities which is known to exist', perpetuating the

²⁵ Edinburgh: National Records of Scotland: Countryside Commission for Scotland Archive CCS3/6: Minutes of CCS Management and Projects Committee, 13 November 1968.

²⁶ CCS, *First Annual Report*, 1968, p. 8.

²⁷ Edinburgh: National Records of Scotland: Scottish Development Department Archive DD12/3456: Draft policy document, 1969; Countryside Commission for Scotland Archive CCS3/6: 'Policy on Country Parks for Scotland', March 1970, p. 2.

²⁸ Edinburgh: National Records of Scotland: Countryside Commission for Scotland Archive CCS3/6: 'Policy on Country Parks for Scotland', March 1970, pp. 1, 2.

²⁹ Edinburgh: National Records of Scotland: Countryside Commission for Scotland Archive CCS3/6: 'Policy on Country Parks for Scotland', March 1970, p. 2.

myth that had surfaced some time earlier but which had still yet to be quantified or, indeed, proven to any degree for Scotland.³⁰

CCS also sought to clarify the issue of supply and demand by commissioning, in 1968, a report on existing recreational provision, to help plan the location of country parks to avoid competition with existing facilities, and to measure the geography of recreational demand. The report would also provide a basis for appraising emerging country park proposals. However, CCS decided not to delay assessments and designations while waiting for it.³¹ A report was eventually produced in 1971, but there is no evidence that it was ever referred to again, and no trace of it remains.³²

Financial constraints imposed by government presented a further obstacle, especially as CCS expected to be inundated with applications due to the assumed unmet need, the generosity of the grant level, and the urgency communicated by the SDD. To manage this, CCS decided to sift applications, prioritising those which improved existing recreational sites, enabled recreational use of rehabilitated land, or provided facilities in areas of significant need.³³ Within a year of the legislation, policy was thus edging away from the original concept of new and strategically located provision to address evidenced unmet need, and towards investment in facilities already in use and reclamation sites, the locations of which were of course already established and could not be made responsive to patterns of demand.

³⁰ Edinburgh: National Records of Scotland: Scottish Development Department Archive DD12/3456: Draft policy document, 1969; Countryside Commission for Scotland Archive CCS3/6: 'Policy on Country Parks for Scotland', March 1970, p. 1.

³¹ Edinburgh: National Records of Scotland: Countryside Commission for Scotland Archive CCS3/1: Papers for Management and Projects Committee, 13 November 1968.

³² Edinburgh: National Records of Scotland: Countryside Commission for Scotland Archive CCS3/1: Papers for Meeting, 10 March 1971.

³³ Edinburgh: National Records of Scotland: Countryside Commission for Scotland Archive CCS3/6: 'Policy on Country Parks for Scotland', March 1970, p. 3.

The issue of sport remained as a further unresolved issue after legislation. Sport had already posed problems in the designation of countryside (specifically as to whether golf courses should count as countryside), and the lack of clear guidance on this important dimension caused continuing confusion. Some local authorities took the view that a reasonable amount of formal sport provision, in the form of playing pitches or a golf course, would (so long as it was green) not detract from the essential 'rural character' requirement. There was no sound basis for such a position, other than a vague provision in the SDD circular allowing 'areas where games may be played', and other local authorities took a harder line, working on the basis that sport was not permitted at all in country parks. CCS had tended hitherto to favour the exclusion of all sites offering sporting provision, but was urged from within to take a more liberal approach.³⁴ Its attitude was clearer in some instances than others, though; those country parks that included golf courses had to fund these facilities elsewhere, but in other respects the boundary between sport and informal recreation was much fuzzier, requiring determination on a case by case basis. To add to the confusion, the 1970 policy made no reference at all to land-based sport, although it was willing to accept jetties to enable recreational use of inland water.³⁵ By 1973, CCS had relaxed sufficiently to support sailing, boating, fishing and swimming, 'or any other water sport or recreation'.³⁶ Again, confusion characterised the approach. Scotland was not unique in this respect, and in 1969 Joan Davidson, a Countryside Commissioner south of the border, sought to develop a more precise definition that included an expectation of evidenced unmet demand, priority for areas where countryside damage was a

³⁴ Edinburgh: National Records of Scotland: Countryside Commission for Scotland Archive CCS6/1: T Huxley, 'Progress on the creation of Country Parks in Scotland: A review', paper for meeting 2 June 1969.

³⁵ Edinburgh: National Records of Scotland: Countryside Commission for Scotland archive: CCS3/6: 'Policy on Country Parks for Scotland', March 1970, p. 4.

³⁶ CCS: *A Policy for Country Parks: Information Sheet No. 4* (Perth: CCS, 1973).

problem, and the capability of containing a large volume of people without disturbing neighbours. Davidson also urged the inclusion of interesting scenery and a variety of sporting and other activities. But there is no evidence that these ideas were ever taken forward in Scottish thinking or planning.³⁷

In the meantime, and before publication of CCS' formal policy, the first country park had already been designated, at Culzean in Ayrshire. This was declared by CCS to be 'a model for all Britain', and by the NTS as 'establishing a prototype'.³⁸ An NTS-owned site to be managed under a complex agreement with local authorities, Culzean was inconveniently located, over fifty miles from any large population centre, and an already-established recreational attraction that charged for admission. Whilst it met some of the proposed criteria, it was not what had originally been intended by the legislators, so to label such a substantial departure from policy as an exemplar was perverse. Even Jamie Stormonth Darling, Secretary of the NTS, acknowledged that Culzean was 'a country park...of a very different nature to that conceived by those who thought up part IV of the Countryside (Scotland) Act.'³⁹ Culzean had some exemplary characteristics, not least the co-operation of the NTS with three distinct (and politically varied) local authorities, but if Culzean exemplified anything, it was an unusual degree of pragmatism in applying the policy criteria.

³⁷ Joan Davidson, 'Countryside Commission Current Objectives' paper to Countryside Commission, 1969, cited by Hughes, 'Muirshiel Country Park', p. 15-16.

³⁸ Edinburgh: National Trust for Scotland Archives: 01/0041/27/02: notes on visit by William Ross, Secretary of State for Scotland, 19 December 1969; letter from J Stormonth Darling, NTS, to S Mackintosh, Glasgow City Council, 6 June 1969.

³⁹ Edinburgh: National Trust for Scotland Archives: 01/0041/27/02: letter from J Stormonth Darling, NTS, to S Mackintosh, Glasgow City Council, 6 June 1969.



Figure 5.2: Culzean Castle, centrepiece of the country park (Author's collection)

Further success proved elusive, however. CCS continued to receive proposals, and had twenty possible schemes under consideration in early 1970, but a year later Culzean was still the only designated site in Scotland.⁴⁰ In contrast, only 17 counties in England had yet to develop an application.⁴¹ CCS identified several issues affecting take-up, including a reluctance on the part of local authorities to find the 25% that would represent their contribution to the overall cost of a project, a lack of skilled staff within councils who might develop proposals, a reluctance to employ external consultants in their place, and land acquisition problems.⁴² But there were other stumbling-blocks too, including CCS' quite reasonable insistence on being satisfied that schemes were viable before committing to them; in 1971 two proposals were

⁴⁰ Edinburgh: National Records of Scotland: Countryside Commission for Scotland Archive CCS3/1: Minutes of meetings 11 March 1970, 10 March 1971.

⁴¹ Tarrant, 'Country Park Provision', p. 96.

⁴² Edinburgh: National Records of Scotland: Countryside Commission for Scotland Archive CCS3/1: Minutes of meeting 11 March 1970.

deferred as 'not yet appropriate for recognition', lacking co-ordinated plans and evidence of the 25% council subvention.⁴³ CCS may have had no executive powers, but its rôle did at least allow it to exercise an effective veto on unsuitable schemes.

By March 1972, when just two further country parks had been added to the portfolio, the Select Committee on Scottish Affairs had become sufficiently concerned about progress to raise questions.⁴⁴ They were at least partly prompted by the fact that England & Wales, notwithstanding their later start, already had thirty parks registered, 35 more agreed in principle, and over a hundred applications under consideration.⁴⁵ CCS responded that they too had considered several applications, but many had been rejected, or deferred, under the criteria agreed with SDD. CCS was nevertheless feeling the pressure of expectation, and ordered a review which re-opened all previous applications for reconsideration as well as seeking new suggestions; a list of 72 potential sites resulted. The fact that thirteen of these were eventually designated (mostly some years later) hints at the possibility that CCS might have been excessively rigid in its initial appraisals, but it self-assessed its attitude as 'fairly liberal' whilst recognising that a more open approach to applications might be appropriate.⁴⁶

A revised policy document was launched late in 1972 introducing changes in outlook, and anticipating the new regional planning expectations that would arrive with local government reorganisation in 1975.⁴⁷ The new policy dropped its predecessor's

⁴³ Edinburgh: National Records of Scotland: Countryside Commission for Scotland Archive CCS3/2: Minutes of meeting 8 March 1972.

⁴⁴ Edinburgh: National Records of Scotland: Countryside Commission for Scotland Archive CCS3/2: Minutes of meeting 8 March 1972.

⁴⁵ White, J. 'The Management and Financing of Country Parks' (unpublished PhD thesis, University of Cambridge, 1971), p 148. As White was a member of staff at the Countryside Commission, she was in a position to know.

⁴⁶ Edinburgh: National Records of Scotland: Countryside Commission for Scotland Archive CCS6/5. 'Country Parks in Scotland: A Reassessment 1968-72'.

⁴⁷ CCS: *A Policy for Country Parks: Information Sheet No. 4* (Perth: CCS, 1973).

reference to demand, perhaps because slow progress was at last throwing doubt on this question. The requirement for convenience and accessibility was modified to allow siting anywhere in designated countryside subject to evidence of need, and adequate access roads; access on foot was no longer expected.⁴⁸ However, site location would need to take due account of the existence of other, nearby facilities, to ensure an efficient use of resources.⁴⁹ CCS thus reaffirmed its commitment to a strategic approach, a laudable aim that was made hopelessly idealistic both by the lack of viable applications from which strategic selections could be made, and the overriding imperative of increasing its portfolio of sites. Indeed, the strategic aspiration was almost immediately compromised by CCS' readiness to entertain two applicants adjacent to the large and resource-hungry Strathclyde site already under development.⁵⁰

Once completed, the 1972 review was largely ignored for two years, while the new policy generated just one further designated site – albeit one which would have failed to qualify previously.⁵¹ CCS compensated for this by introducing a new method of boosting its country park numbers; sites as yet unfinished could now be provisionally designated pending completion, and this allowed two further country parks, neither yet open to the public, to be added to the total.⁵² But the portfolio remained 'uncomfortably small' in comparison to progress in England & Wales, where 100 parks were now

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 2-3.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 3.

⁵⁰ Edinburgh: National Records of Scotland: Countryside Commission for Scotland Archive CCS6/5: Minutes of Management and Projects Committee, 26 July 1972; minutes of CCS meetings 10 April 1973 and 12 June 1973.

⁵¹ Edinburgh: National Records of Scotland: Countryside Commission for Scotland Archive CCS3/5: Minutes of meeting 12 February 1974. The new park was Craigtoun (Fife), a countryside site with many 'urban' characteristics such as extensive equipped play space, formal gardens and a miniature railway.

⁵² Edinburgh: National Records of Scotland: Countryside Commission for Scotland Archive CCS3/5: Minutes of meeting 12 February 1974.

registered, and CCS decided to reduce its requirement for an approved management plan to a summary document whose preparation was less dependent on prior operational experience.⁵³ The obvious alternative approach, of increasing councils' capacity to develop adequate management plans, was not considered until 1981, when CCS launched training and formal guidance on this aspect.⁵⁴

Rethinking and reorganisation, 1974 - 84

In 1974, CCS published its *Park System for Scotland*, a vision for the future of outdoor recreation in the country.⁵⁵ It represented an attempt to think more strategically about recreation provision, and was generally well received, although its recommendations about national park designation were controversial and tended to dominate discussion to the exclusion of other elements in its analysis.⁵⁶ The document acknowledged the disappointing progress made thus far on country parks, while still seeing potential for new facilities and drawing encouragement from reclamation projects such as Lochore Meadows.⁵⁷ Instead of a single solution to the challenge of recreation in the form of the country park, however, it proposed a hierarchy of provision that harked back to the Addison recommendations, raising the possibility of different types of park to meet different recreational aspirations. It also hinted at a move away from the 'honeypot' concept, in that the parks '**may** be designed to ease pressure...' [*author's emphasis*] and asserted that 'the original notion that all country parks would probably be situated

⁵³ Edinburgh: National Records of Scotland: Countryside Commission for Scotland Archive CCS3/7: Minutes of meeting 11 March 1975.

⁵⁴ CCS: *Management Plans for Country Parks: A Guide to their Preparation* (Perth, CCS, 1981)

⁵⁵ CCS: *A Park System for Scotland*, (CCS, Perth, 1974).

⁵⁶ The *Park System* called these 'special parks'; although it eschewed reference specifically to national parks, it was clear that this was what was meant.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 21.

fairly close to the main cities and towns is no longer part of the accepted thinking on the subject'.⁵⁸ This statement was to some extent a legitimisation of what had already taken place, in that, of the four sites so far designated, two (Culzean and Muirshiel) were quite inconveniently located for access from major population centres. Nevertheless, it was a remarkable assertion, since a good deal of 'accepted thinking' was still very much of a mind that green belt land might be appropriate for recreation, as for instance in the Development Plan for Stirlingshire, also published in 1974, while both Edinburgh and Aberdeen had made specific provision for recreational facilities in their green belts.⁵⁹ Nigel Curry noted that, in England & Wales, thinking at this time was very much directed towards, rather than away from, prioritising provision in green belts and urban fringes.⁶⁰ Martin Elson concurred: 'It is now accepted wisdom that...urban fringe areas...should receive priority attention in the allocation of public funds for recreation.'⁶¹ 'Accepted thinking' in Scotland and 'accepted wisdom' in England & Wales were apparently two different things. Aberdeen refused to follow either lead, and allocated recreational land, including projected country parks, both in and beyond the green belt boundary; the city was frustrated more by conflicting land use priorities within the council itself and by failure to engage constructively with its neighbouring authorities, than by CCS' equivocal green belt policy.⁶²

Country park policy hitherto had been predicated on the need to provide alternative countryside to reduce pressure on vulnerable areas. One such area under pressure was Glencoe and Glen Nevis, where visitor levels were causing erosion and

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 21.

⁵⁹ Stirling County Development Plan Supplementary Written Statement, September 1974, cited by *A Park System for Scotland*, p. 21; Taylor, 'Country Park Provision', pp. 36-37.

⁶⁰ Curry, *Countryside Recreation*, p. 52.

⁶¹ Elson, *Perspectives on Green Belt Local Plans*, p. 34.

⁶² Taylor, 'Country Park Provision', p. 46.

environmental damage. A CCS investigation in 1975, however, rejected the idea of a country park in this locality, since distraction was not what was needed; the priorities were seen as environmental conservation measures and visitor management, while sustaining a flow of visitors that was making an important economic contribution to the locality.⁶³ Flying in the face of earlier thinking on vulnerable sites, the report both accepted and accommodated the fact of tourism in this locality, recognising that the need was not for recreational space *per se*, but for access to places of particular significance and resonance, with facilities such as toilets, caravan pitches and rangers to support visitors and to enable enforcement against undesirable alternatives. This was a radical shift in the underlying philosophy of country parks in Scotland and the way CCS thought about them, that made it possible to see facilities provision as a positive contribution to countryside recreation opportunities rather than a defensive measure to divert high-intensity tourism.

The change in policy outlined in the *Park System* was followed by a small flurry of new sites, and over the next twelve months several country park projects were designated, provisionally designated, or brought forward for active consideration.⁶⁴ One of the early projects to benefit from the new 'accepted thinking' on proximity to population centres was Aden Country Park, provisionally registered in 1976.⁶⁵ Aden was 30 miles from the nearest population centre and, in a departure from the idea that any countryside would suffice, would be provided not only with facilities to support countryside recreation of various types, but would also offer a significant heritage

⁶³ Edinburgh: National Records of Scotland: Countryside Commission for Scotland Archive CCS3/8: Minutes of meeting 9 September 1975.

⁶⁴ Taylor, 'Country Park Provision', p. 32.

⁶⁵ Edinburgh: National Records of Scotland: Countryside Commission for Scotland Archive CCS3/9: Minutes of meeting 9 March 1976.

component, with extensive interpretation, based on the origins of the site as a working farm and estate, and placing centre stage the conservation of historic structures within the site.⁶⁶ The way funding was utilised at Aden, and the close involvement there of senior CCS staff, was a further indicator that a more positive approach was being adopted, with a distinct additional attraction added to the basic provision of recreational space; demand was no longer the only factor driving provision.

Other country park projects similarly adapted and modified the demand-led concept. Palacerigg, opened in 1974, was originally acquired to provide open space, but was developed as a wildlife conservation centre under its first resident warden, the naturalist David Stephen.⁶⁷ Lochore Meadows opened in 1976, with conservation and education objectives to meet alongside recreation, and included a nature reserve; it was expected to offer much more than 'picnic and play'.⁶⁸ John Muir Country Park at Dunbar incorporated a substantial area devoted to nature conservation, where access would be deliberately limited and visiting actively discouraged.⁶⁹ It also broke the mould in other ways; its recreation area, long since established and operational, included not only a golf course but also several sports pitches, space for sand-yachting, and even a wild-fowling area.⁷⁰ These widened the brief of country parks well beyond recreation and into the realms of heritage and nature conservation, and broke through

⁶⁶ Edinburgh: National Records of Scotland: Countryside Commission for Scotland Archive CCS3/9: Minutes of meeting 9 March 1976.

⁶⁷ The development of wildlife conservation at Palacerigg Country Park is described in David Stephen, *Living with Wildlife* (Edinburgh: Canongate, 1989).

⁶⁸ R. Blair, National Trust for Scotland, quoted in M. Taylor, 'Lochore Meadows: Proposals for a Country Park' (Unpublished document, Glenrothes, Fife Regional Council, 1976), p. 22.

⁶⁹ Edinburgh: National Records of Scotland: Countryside Commission for Scotland Archive CCS3/9: Minutes of meeting 14 September 1976 and 12 October 1976.

⁷⁰ East Lothian District Council, 'John Muir Country Park: Prescriptive Management Plan' (Unpublished report, Haddington, East Lothian District Council, 1976), pp. 1, 11.

the long-standing issue of the appropriateness of formal sports facilities in a country park setting.



Figure 5.3: Sports provision within John Muir Country Park (Author's collection)

Several factors came together to promote a renewed interest in country parks in 1974-75; the *Park System* was one, but of greater significance was the reorganisation of local government in Scotland, introducing a two-tier system of regional councils with strategic service responsibilities, and district councils managing purely local services. Both tiers would take responsibility for leisure services; their wider boundaries provided a stronger revenue base, enabling the employment of specialist staff, and the regional authorities were large enough to cover not only the conurbations that produced the alleged demand for recreation but also the countryside areas where that demand might be met. The cities were no longer autonomous, and the regions could therefore plan for provision for their own population centres, in countryside they also managed. The districts too were better able to meet both the required 25% subvention

for development of country parks and the ongoing revenue costs the parks would represent, although CCS remained anxious about the constrained levels of central government funding available at a time when the organisation needed to forge new relationships.⁷¹ There was little room for manoeuvre here, however; central government faced both recession and inflation, and was forced to seek help from the International Monetary Fund at the end of 1976.⁷²

Sports historian Ian Thomson points out that the dual responsibility for leisure that emerged from reorganisation encouraged overlap and duplication; among other things it failed to recognise that strategic provision could also function as a local facility.⁷³ The 1981 Stodart Inquiry into local government in Scotland was highly critical of the division of responsibility for recreation, which caused ‘the most confusion among authorities, and thus the widest scope for wasteful duplication and competition.’⁷⁴ Stella Thornton interpreted reorganisation as a double-edged sword, in that whilst it enabled some projects to move forward, it delayed others; but she overlooked the greater capacity reorganisation afforded, and also its results on the ground, where a stagnated programme was revived by a change of responsibility and outlook.⁷⁵ In the end, of the 36 parks designated by CCS during its lifetime, 18 were managed by district councils, and a further four by joint committees including districts, while 13 were regionally managed.⁷⁶ This sharing of responsibility for provision could not have

⁷¹ Edinburgh: National Records of Scotland: Countryside Commission for Scotland Archive: CCS 10/61: Letter from Jean Balfour, Chair of CCS, to Lord Hughes, Minister of State at Scottish Office, 18 November 1974.

⁷² Richard Roberts, ‘Britain on the Brink’, *Financial World*, December/January 2016-17, pp 25-26 (p. 25)

⁷³ Thomson, ‘Scotland’, p. 33.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 34.

⁷⁵ Thornton, ‘Policy-making’, p. 58.

⁷⁶ Edinburgh: National Records of Scotland: Countryside Commission of Scotland Archive CCS9/63: Country Park Register. The one missing from the addition of these numbers was managed by a New Town Development Corporation.

happened without the modernisation of Scottish local government, but regionalisation was not the only factor; larger and more viable districts also played an important role.

Regional authorities were made responsible for structure planning, treating the whole of their region as a single entity in which development, infrastructure and services could be co-ordinated. The SDD expected the regions to plan for recreation and tourism, emphasising the growing importance of this sector to the Scottish economy, and required the regions to make statements about the needs, opportunities and priorities in their areas.⁷⁷ This too represented a significant shift in thinking, away from the defensive containment policies that had given birth to country parks and towards an understanding that recreation was beneficial not only to the economy but also to individual health and well-being. It was the first time this had been formally recognised in Scottish policy, and Deborah Peel and Greg Lloyd suggest it signalled a move towards integrating leisure planning not only with economic development but also with welfare priorities and social inclusion.⁷⁸

In 1976, CCS was an active partner in STARPS (Scottish Tourism and Recreation Planning Studies), a scheme that hoped to capitalise on these expectations.⁷⁹ STARPS was a holistic attempt to bring recreation and tourism's spatial demands together with its recognised social, economic and environmental conservation benefits, and to co-ordinate the different agencies and bodies with overlapping objectives in this area. It aimed at a more efficient use of resources, based on evidence and strategic

⁷⁷ Edinburgh: National Records of Scotland: Scottish Development Department Archive: SDD Planning Advice Note No. 5, September 1975.

⁷⁸ Deborah Peel and M. Gregory Lloyd, 'The Land Use Planning System in Scotland - but Not as We Know It?', *Scottish Affairs*, 57 (2006), 91–108 (p. 93).

⁷⁹ CCS *et al*, *STARPS, A Guide to the Preparation of Initial Regional Strategies: Planning for Sport, Outdoor Recreation and Tourism* (Dartington: Dart Publications, 1976).

planning, and 'represented one of the most concerted efforts within any field to produce an integrated planning framework at both national and regional scales'.⁸⁰ It had social inclusion objectives targeting 'all Scottish residents who wish to take part', and urged authorities to consider locating country parks close to people's homes (a clear contradiction of what had been stated in the *Park System* two years earlier), as well as in remoter areas where economic gain could also be achieved. STARPS even provided a methodology for assessing demand and supply. It sought an integrated and collaborative approach between the different bodies concerned with recreation, and promoted full use of existing facilities alongside 'such limited new provision as [might] be possible'.⁸¹ It thus addressed several fundamental policy issues, but it failed to gain much traction with local authorities. Ian Thomson attributed this to policy fragmentation and a half-hearted financial commitment, while planner Gordon Dickinson blamed the ambivalence of some regional councils towards leisure and tourism, and the absence of a national driving force behind the initiative.⁸² At Aberdeen, William Taylor perceived that CCS was under pressure to deliver more sites, while his authority was reluctant to wait either for STARPS to assess the need for country parks or for regional planning to decide where to locate them. As a result, he (not unreasonably) felt his employers were asking him to solve a problem that had yet to be properly defined.⁸³

Central Regional Council was more patient, and its 1980 recreation strategy was produced using STARPS methodology. It included an assessment of the level and

⁸⁰ Gordon Dickinson, 'Countryside Recreation', in P. H. Selman (ed.), *Countryside Planning in Practice: The Scottish Experience* (Stirling: Stirling University Press, 1988), pp. 90–102 (p. 98).

⁸¹ CCS *et al*, *STARPS*, cited by Taylor, 'Country Park Provision', pp. 9–10; Dickinson, 'Countryside Recreation', p. 98.

⁸² Thomson, 'Scotland', pp. 34, 43; Dickinson, 'Countryside Recreation', p. 98.

⁸³ Taylor, 'Country Park Provision', pp. 58–59.

sources of demand, the spatial pattern and distribution of countryside recreation, the environmental impact it caused, the opportunities available to meet the need and their location, and the key areas of provision where facilities were lacking – in this instance, in camping and caravan provision.⁸⁴ CCS welcomed the document, but did not go so far as to commend the approach, in spite of the gaps in knowledge it was evidently addressing.⁸⁵ Instead, it offered the guarded comment that it hoped STARPS would help with siting future country parks, but that its experience had shown that political considerations, and opportunism, were more influential in reality.⁸⁶ This was the abandonment of the idea that CCS could deliver a strategy for locating country parks in response to demand, and condemned STARPS to be merely a missed opportunity.

Although only two new parks were formally approved between 1976 and 1979, there was still enthusiasm for the country park concept in the early years of regional government. In 1977, CCS had several significant capital projects lined up, and a review in 1980 established that in addition to the existing eleven provisional registrations, a further seventeen projects were being considered.⁸⁷ Several of these were coming to maturity, and a flurry of formal designation took place in 1980 that doubled the number of parks, from 11 to 22.⁸⁸ In a period of financial stringency, this was remarkable, even unexpected, progress, although much of the investment had taken place in earlier years.

⁸⁴ Central Regional Council, 'Strategy for Urban Recreation, Countryside Recreation and Tourism' (Unpublished report, Stirling, CRC, 1980)

⁸⁵ Edinburgh: National Records of Scotland: Countryside Commission for Scotland Archive CCS3/17: Report to meeting 13 May 1980.

⁸⁶ Edinburgh: National Records of Scotland: Countryside Commission for Scotland Archive CCS3/17: Report to meeting 9 September 1980.

⁸⁷ Edinburgh: National Records of Scotland: Countryside Commission for Scotland Archive CCS3/13: Papers for meeting 11 October 1977.

⁸⁸ Edinburgh: National Records of Scotland: Countryside Commission for Scotland Archive CCS3/17: Report to meeting 9 September 1980.

Designations in 1980 included the most remarkable departure from established policy – it might even be regarded as subverting the entire country park concept – in the designation of Brodick Castle Country Park, on the island of Arran. This was an NTS property, already the main visitor attraction on a popular holiday island, and in spite of its extreme remoteness – over two hours away from the nearest large population centre, and requiring a lengthy ferry trip – senior CCS staff were keen, seeing the possibility of an attractive, and relatively inexpensive, addition to the portfolio.⁸⁹ They even advised the NTS on how to construct an application so as to get round objections raised by CCS' own case officer, who had understandably identified 'conceptual difficulties in recognising Brodick estate as a country park'.⁹⁰ Provisional registration, pending a management plan, was granted by CCS in 1980; the requirement for the management plan was quietly dropped two months later.⁹¹ In a year marked by a several designations, the special treatment given to Brodick is striking.

The sudden surge in designations in 1980 is interesting. Many of these projects had been under development for some time, and the spending on them had been profiled to take place around this time; but it had also become clear that national policy on local government finance was changing under the regime of Margaret Thatcher, who began an offensive on local government spending in 1980, starting with Scotland, where only two of the regions were Conservative-led after the 1980 elections.⁹² Compulsory Competitive Tendering (CCT) was introduced for capital projects in 1980, and new

⁸⁹ Edinburgh: National Records of Scotland: Countryside Commission for Scotland Archive CCS3/9: Minutes of meeting 13 November 1979.

⁹⁰ Edinburgh: National Trust for Scotland Archives: 01/0020/16/01: letter, W B Prior (CCS) to W Kirkland, Cunninghame District Council, 10 April 1980; 01/0020/17/02: minutes of meeting of Brodick Joint Management Committee, 13 June 1980; letter, J R Turner (CCS) to A B Bryant (NTS), 6 September 1978.

⁹¹ Edinburgh: National Trust for Scotland Archives: 01/0020/14/01: note on telephone conversation, A B Bryant (NTS) with W B Prior (CCS) 12 September 1978.

⁹² Torrance, *We in Scotland*, p. 53.

legislation in 1981 strengthened the powers of the Secretary of State to rein in authorities seen to be profligate, while Thatcher herself stated clearly her intent at the Scottish Conservative Conference in 1981: 'such extravagance is totally unnecessary, and we have got to bring it under better control.'⁹³ Cuts were looming, then; so it was perhaps expedient for authorities to complete capital projects while they were still permitted to do so.



Figure 5.4: Gardens at Brodick Country Park, Arran (Author's collection)

A second countryside Act, the Countryside (Scotland) Act of 1981, was only a minor measure, though it did enshrine the concept of regional parks, first proposed within the *Park System* document. More significantly, it at last gave CCS powers over its own grant-making.⁹⁴ A new policy document was issued in 1982, introducing further

⁹³ Margaret Thatcher, speech at Scottish Conservative Conference 8 May 1981, cited by Torrance, *We in Scotland*, p. 54.

⁹⁴ PP: Countryside (Scotland) Act 1981, Ss. 1, 8. Regional parks, which were larger areas of countryside often in multiple ownership, were an attempt to integrate recreation into land used for productive or other

changes in approach; CCS was still willing to entertain proposals from anywhere in designated countryside, but now actively encouraged local authorities to use its resources to improve sites already in use.⁹⁵ Other land uses that would be tolerated within a country park setting still included agriculture and forestry, but were extended to nature conservation as well.⁹⁶ Again, this was nothing more than legitimising existing practice, but it does reflect the difficulties CCS was experiencing in generating interest in country parks, and the compromises needed to keep the policy moving.

Stagnation and reappraisal, 1985 - 92

Although CCS had identified several potential projects in its pipeline in the 1980 review, and designated six reservoir sites as these were released from the public water supply in the early 1980s, designations tailed off considerably after 1985; just three further parks were added to the portfolio after this date. By 1983 only around a third of CCS' annual capital outlays were going toward country parks, and the focus was shifting towards projects of a different nature, including work on post-industrial dereliction, and the development of projects such as community woodlands and footpaths.⁹⁷

The battle with central government over local authority spending had also intensified by this time; Scottish councils had found ways round the 1981 restrictions through rate increases and creative accounting, and had largely managed to retain in-house services despite CCT. Hugh Atkinson and Stuart Wilks-Heeg describe 'a cat-and-

purposes, and had been floated in the *Park System* as part of the proposed hierarchy. Four regional parks were eventually created, all of which incorporated country parks.

⁹⁵ CCS: *A Policy for Country Parks in Scotland* (Perth, CCS, 1982), p. 2.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 3

⁹⁷ Edinburgh: National Records of Scotland: Countryside Commission for Scotland Archive CCS3/22: Papers for meeting 14 June 1983.

mouse game' where local authorities found ways of subverting the clear intentions of central government to rein them in.⁹⁸ Historian David Torrance asserts that Scottish local government 'depict[ed] itself at the forefront of the battle against Thatcherism throughout the 1980s', and cites a *Financial Times* observation that 'Scotland had become a test-bed for the government's offensive against local authority spending.'⁹⁹ The Scottish Office, meanwhile, was caught in the crossfire; it too was subject to cuts, having lost a tenth of its staff establishment to 'efficiency savings' in 1980, and finding itself characterised as part of the 'dependency culture' that was anathema to Thatcherism.¹⁰⁰ Surprisingly, the block grant came through unscathed, but it was nevertheless evident that a new approach to resourcing civic projects, including parks, was coming into being.

In 1986, CCS commissioned a report from consultants on its programme for the succeeding five years. This was a first attempt at medium-term planning, and raised fundamental questions about the purpose and priorities of the organisation. It proposed an assessment of supply and demand for recreation, and although it recognised the past achievements of CCS in relation to country parks, it avoided mention of them as part of CCS' future.¹⁰¹ It also sought to address some fundamental weaknesses, including CCS' co-ordination with other bodies and its capacity to articulate its *raison d'être* in a new context: one in which recreation and conservation were now firmly embedded in local authority planning, the private sector was demonstrating greater potential to provide recreation facilities, and a stronger

⁹⁸ Atkinson and Wilks-Heeg, *Local Government from Thatcher to Blair*, p. 67.

⁹⁹ Torrance, *We in Scotland*, p. 55.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 37, 45.

¹⁰¹ Edinburgh: National Records of Scotland: Countryside Commission for Scotland Archive CCS3/28. Arthur Young, 'CCS Strategy and Programme 1987-88 to 1991-92', (unpublished report, 1986), pp. 3, 9.

voluntary sector was engaging more with conservation activity.¹⁰² The report also challenged CCS on public awareness of recreation provision, and on the quality of the parks.¹⁰³ CCS' response indicated a readiness to redirect resource away from existing programme areas (such as country parks) and towards new priorities. All CCS' future activities were assigned performance measures to monitor use of resources; but just one of the 27 indicators to which CCS committed measured any aspect of country parks; these were now becoming part of the past, rather than the future.¹⁰⁴

This was confirmed in a specific policy statement in February 1990. Although four future country park projects were identified in this document, it also emphasised a reduction in the funding for the country park capital programme from £150,000 in 1990-91 to just £90,000 in 1991-92, and that country park project funding beyond this date would require an allocation outside the programmed CCS budget altogether.¹⁰⁵ And although work on country parks did not cease completely, it is clear that there was already a much lower level of interest, with the maximum grant scaled back to just 60% in 1988.¹⁰⁶ CCS rejected two applications for new parks in 1987, at least one of which would almost certainly have been successful had it emerged earlier, and turned down two further projects (again one of these would have been likely to succeed if put forward earlier) in 1990-91.¹⁰⁷ The organisation was also uncharacteristically reluctant

¹⁰² Arthur Young, 'CCS Strategy and Programme 1987-88 to 1991-92' (Unpublished report, 1986), pp. 4, 11.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, p. 9.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 26. The performance measures were not especially well developed and were in some cases unmeasurable.

¹⁰⁵ Edinburgh: National Records of Scotland: Countryside Commission for Scotland Archive CCS3/35: Report to meeting 12 February 1990.

¹⁰⁶ Edinburgh: National Records of Scotland: Countryside Commission for Scotland Archive CCS3/29: Papers for meetings 10 February 1987, 11 May 1987; Campbell, 'The Wood not the Trees', p. 7.

¹⁰⁷ Edinburgh: National Records of Scotland: Countryside Commission for Scotland Archive CCS3/29: Minutes of meeting 10 February 1987; minutes of meeting 9 June 1987; CCS3/36: Papers for meeting 13 November 1990; CCS3/38: Papers for meeting 10 September 1991.

to back the persuasive case for relatively modest support for Chatelherault in the late 1980s. It is hard to escape a conclusion that central government restrictions on public spending, and the philosophy behind them, played a part in this attitude. But the country park was not quite dead in the water; amid the financial constraints of 1989, CCS was able to find substantial sums towards a visitor centre at Brodick and for the relocation of a working farm at Aden.¹⁰⁸ An entirely new park at Townhill Woods was designated in 1991, as almost CCS' last act; this site had been on the list of possible country parks since 1983, and had already received significant CCS support prior to the 1990 statement of future intent.¹⁰⁹ In keeping with its previous record of occasional subversion, CCS also managed to provide a six-figure grant for what was a partly ineligible project at Mugdock.¹¹⁰

Issues that arose in policy

Proximity

Discussion now moves on to the issues that arose in CCS policy on country parks, and how these were addressed at various stages in the country park story. 'Proximity' describes the requirement that CCS and local authorities locate their country parks with reference to pre-existing provision; this was of course motivated by a desire to avoid duplication and competition between sites serving similar audiences, and to

¹⁰⁸ Edinburgh: National Records of Scotland: Countryside Commission for Scotland Archive CCS3/34: Minutes of meeting 12 September 1989; CCS 3/35 Minutes of meeting 12 February 1990.

¹⁰⁹ Edinburgh: National Records of Scotland: Countryside Commission for Scotland Archive CCS3/39: Papers for meeting 10 December 1991.

¹¹⁰ Edinburgh: National Records of Scotland: Countryside Commission for Scotland Archive CCS3/36: Minutes of meeting 10 February 1987; minutes of meeting 9 October 1990. The ineligible element was the provision of staff accommodation.

ensure a fairer geographical distribution of funding. In practice, though, proximity was only really a deterrent to designation in the case of Strathclyde Country Park, and sites in the vicinity of this large and resource-hungry park seem to have been scrutinised more carefully.¹¹¹ Elsewhere, CCS took a more relaxed approach on this issue, preferring to interpret new applications for country parks as 'complementary' if they happened to be close to existing provision, rather than risk losing a possible designation. This was the argument used to justify Camperdown's eventual designation in 1985, in spite of its immediate adjacency to Clatto Country Park, and had some justification, since the two sites fulfilled quite different rôles.¹¹² The argument of complementarity was similarly deployed, less convincingly, in respect of Crombie and Monikie Country Parks, both reservoir sites and just two miles apart; one was viewed as an active recreation site, the other as more passive.¹¹³ And it was again raised, even less convincingly, over the four country parks in West Lothian, all of whose catchments overlap significantly.¹¹⁴

¹¹¹ Edinburgh, National Records of Scotland: Countryside Commission for Scotland Archive CCS3/6: Papers for meeting 9 July 1974.

¹¹² Edinburgh, National Records of Scotland: Scottish Development Department Archive DD23/692: City of Dundee Council report on Camperdown Country Park, 24 August 1982, p. 5.

¹¹³ Edinburgh, National Records of Scotland: Countryside Commission for Scotland Archive CCS3/17: Papers for meeting 9 September 1980.

¹¹⁴ Edinburgh, National Records of Scotland: Countryside Commission for Scotland Archive CCS3/11: Papers for meeting 13 September 1977.

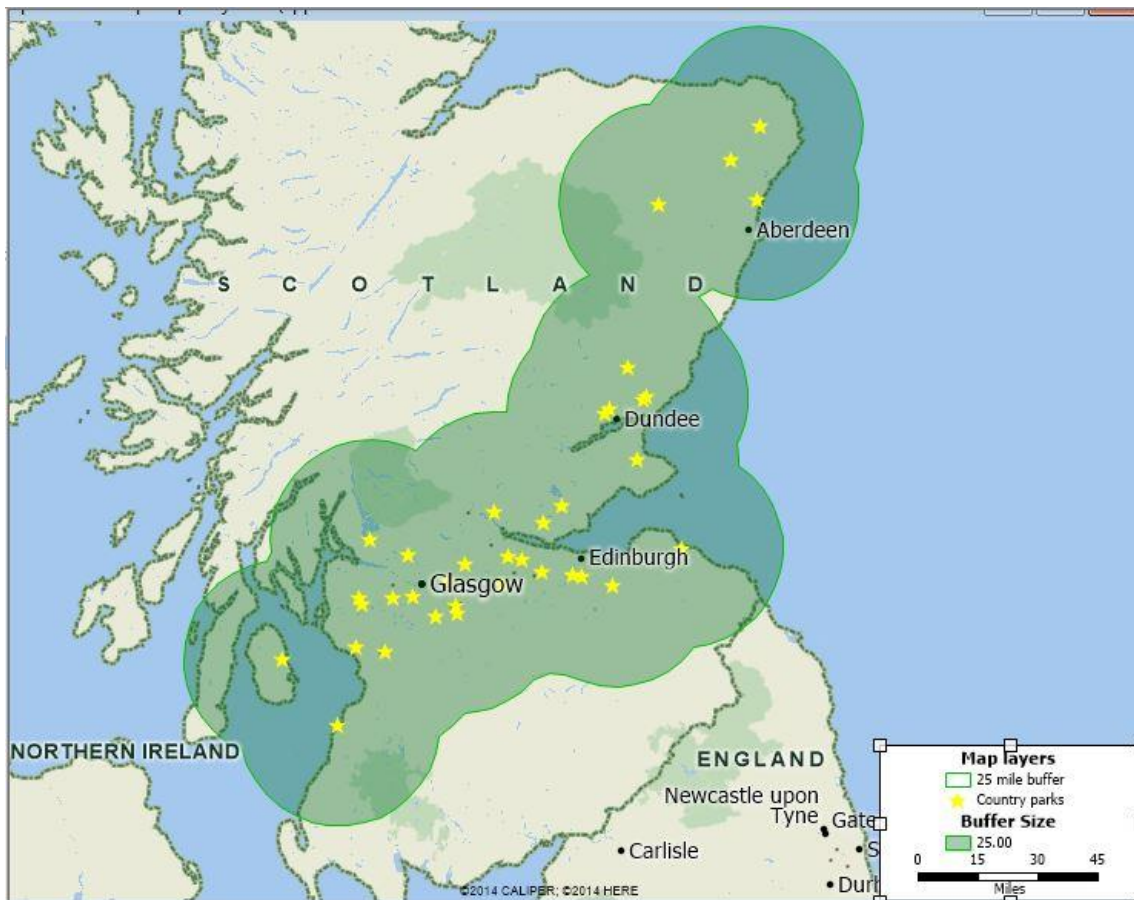


Figure 5.5: Monikie Country Park, Angus (Author's collection)

The map below shows the locations of all 36 country parks, together with catchment areas based on a 25-mile radius from the park, chosen to reflect a generally understood typical maximum journey undertaken for a day out by car in the 1960s and 1970s.¹¹⁵

¹¹⁵ For example, in 'Muiravonside Country Park: Feasibility Study' (Unpublished report, Stirling: Stirling County Planning Dept., n.d.), p. 11; in Garth Christian, *Tomorrow's Countryside: The Road to the Seventies* (London: John Murray, 1966), p. 138, and in Zetter, *Evolution of Country Park Policy*, pp 2-3. The 25-mile figure was widely cited across the UK as the basis of planning for car-borne recreation; it originated in a survey of 1963 by the British Travel Association but has been supported, to a greater or lesser extent, by several other studies, including the *Scottish Leisure Survey* of 1981. Dower also deployed it in his work on countryside around towns. Elizabeth Beazley preferred to measure by time rather than distance and suggested a journey time of one hour from her experience in working with country parks. Elisabeth Beazley, *The Countryside on View* (London, Constable, 1971), p. 31.

Fig. 5.6: Location and catchments of country parks, with 25-mile catchments



Source: Collated data from appendix. Base map used under licence from Caliper, Inc.

The parks are concentrated in the central belt, around Glasgow and Edinburgh, and in the hinterland around Dundee and Aberdeen, though there are more outlying parks, including one (Brodict) on an island that was not only geographically distant but also highly inconvenient. Large areas of Scotland lie outside the catchment areas, especially in the Highlands and Islands but also in Moray, Galloway and the Borders.

Two striking features are evident: one is that several of the sites are spatially very close to one another, not just in the examples already given but also more generally

in Ayrshire, Lanarkshire and the Lothians, while the other is that the catchment areas of the sites overlap to a very considerable extent. A provision of fifteen country parks would have sufficed to provide for the populations within these catchments, justifying Campbell's assertion that 'Scotland may now have too many country parks'.¹¹⁶ All but one of the country parks in Scotland have catchments that overlap with at least one other designated country park; Drumpellier has no fewer than 16 other country parks within its notional catchment.¹¹⁷ Strathclyde, where proximity was most closely scrutinised, had 14 other country parks within a 25-mile radius, and three within ten miles.

Analysis reveals an urban catchment population (Brodick is excluded from this calculation) ranging from 188,000 (Haughton House, Aberdeenshire) up to 1.59 million (Pollok, Glasgow), a very wide range proving that no real account was taken of either urban catchment – the marketplace envisaged for country parks when the idea was first mooted – or potential competition. Some CCS appraisals of potential at individual sites include recognition of site catchment, though no site was ever discounted because of a low catchment population.¹¹⁸

Location and the urban fringe

As this chapter has demonstrated, CCS held different views at various times on the importance of the urban fringe as a location for country parks, sometimes embracing this as the preferred option and at others encouraging provision further afield. CCS' indecision and vacillation on this issue reflected a wider debate taking place during

¹¹⁶ Campbell, 'The Wood not the Trees', p. 51.

¹¹⁷ Source: collated data from appendix.

¹¹⁸ Edinburgh: National Records of Scotland: Countryside Commission for Scotland Archive CCS3/9: Papers for meeting 9 March 1976, for example, which consider the catchment potential of Aden.

this period in Scotland, and across the wider UK, concerning the role of the urban fringe more generally, and the validity of recreation provision within that role.

Whilst there was general agreement that some constraint was needed on urban expansion, there was less consensus on what form this should take. Some argued for priority to be given to production, noting the quality of the land for such an important purpose, and pointing out that although three-quarters of Scotland's land area was of poor agricultural quality, the lowlands close to the towns included much higher-grade land, which needed protection from development of any type, including recreation.¹¹⁹ The Viscount of Arbuthnot, an early Countryside Commissioner, made the point in 1975 that it was just as difficult to countenance the release of good-quality arable land for recreation as it was for other forms of development.¹²⁰ This view was echoed by the geographer A. H. Dawson in 1982, who emphasised the primacy of food supply over the desire for recreation space.¹²¹ Both were following the lead given much earlier by Patrick Abercrombie, whose Clyde Valley plan included a *cordon sanitaire* dominated by market gardening and dairy farming, but were overlooking his rider that some of this land would be needed for housing and recreation.¹²² They were also aligning themselves with long-standing central policy, such as that expressed by the Scott Committee of 1942 which recommended agriculture as the means to a 'desirable'

¹¹⁹ Shucksmith and Lloyd, 'Rural Planning in Scotland', p. 105; J.M. Fladmark, 'Scottish Countryside: Planning in Changing Circumstances', *The Planner*, 66.3 (1980), 70–72 (p. 70).

¹²⁰ Viscount of Arbuthnot, 'Characteristics and Problems of Scottish Land Resources for Recreation' in J. Tivy and G. Dickinson (eds.), 'Land Resources for Recreation in Scotland' (Unpublished conference report, 1976), PP. 4-9 (p. 4).

¹²¹ A.H. Dawson, 'Unused Land on the Urban Fringe in Scotland', in A. B. Cruikshank (ed.), *Where Town Meets Country: Problems of Peri-Urban Areas in Scotland* (Aberdeen: Aberdeen University Press, 1982), pp. 97–106 (p. 101)

¹²² Patrick Abercrombie, *Clyde Valley Regional Plan* (1946).

countryside, and in the post-war consensus, embodied in the Agriculture Act of 1947, of self-sufficiency in farming.¹²³

Others saw an attractive urban fringe as potentially supporting economic development and prosperity, enhancing the quality of the environment adjacent to new housing developments and new economic sites with concomitant benefits for quality of life and inward investment.¹²⁴ Michael Dower wrote a paper for CCS in 1976 that related this countryside to the recreational needs of adjacent populations; he suggested that, contrary to the assertions of farming interests, much of this land was agriculturally marginal, and compromised by the landscape consequences of mineral extraction.¹²⁵ Dower thought that urban fringe sites could be made sufficiently attractive and rural to satisfy the demand to be outside town, and encouraged providers to think about recreational re-use for spaces such as disused gravel workings.¹²⁶ A subsequent review of progress, also by Dower, reported positively on the projects taking place but commented adversely on the more general failure to integrate recreational provision with geo-demographic change of the kind described in chapter 2.¹²⁷

A third perspective, overlapping with these two positions, was that of the apologists for the green belt. Green belts were relatively late coming to Scotland, and arrived with three stated purposes: firstly, to maintain the identity of settlements and prevent coalescence between built-up areas, secondly to provide for recreation and other

¹²³ Kelly, 'Conventional Thinking', p. 115.

¹²⁴ Gregory Lloyd and Deborah Peel, 'Green Belts in Scotland: Towards the Modernisation of a Traditional Concept', *J. of Environmental Planning and Management*, 50 (2007), 639-56 (pp. 644 - 645).

¹²⁵ M. Taylor and J. M. Fladmark, *The Countryside Around Towns: A Review of Change 1976-1985* (Dartington: CCS/Dartington Institute, 1986), p. 33.

¹²⁶ Michael Dower and Robert Aitken, *The Countryside Around Towns in Scotland* (Perth: CCS/Dartington Amenity Research Trust, 1976), p. 35.

¹²⁷ Alistair B. Cruikshank, 'Peri-Urban Areas: A Review', in A. B. Cruikshank (ed.), *Where Town Meets Country: Problems of Peri-Urban Areas in Scotland* (Aberdeen: Aberdeen University Press, 1982), pp. 1-11 (p. 8).

purposes, and thirdly to provide a landscape setting for the town in question.¹²⁸ Their potential for improving the landscape, amenity and health of urban residents was highlighted, as was the easy access on foot or by public transport.¹²⁹ Since by definition green belts were urban fringe locations, recreation on the urban fringe became part of accepted planning policy, as reflected in the Strathclyde Region Structure Plan of 1979, which at last highlighted the importance of green belt recreation provision to residents in the highly-deprived peripheral estates of Clydeside.¹³⁰ Such provision also had potential to protect green belt land from more intrusive development, as well as justifying the land's retention as green space.¹³¹

Thus, for some, the green belt was essentially a sterile area where little or no development could take place, while others saw possibilities for environmentally-sensitive development that would have only limited impact on countryside character, or wished to prioritise agriculture or other land exploitation. The reality that emerged was an uneasy compromise, permitting sports facilities and countryside recreation activities, but also perpetuating mineral extraction and unsightly infrastructure.¹³² The problem posed by the green belt was essentially the same issue as faced recreation provision generally: the absence of any strategic plan for its deployment and the fragmentation of responsibility, especially prior to local government reorganisation.¹³³

¹²⁸ PP: Scottish Development Department Circular 40/1960: *Development in the Countryside and Green Belts*, 1960.

¹²⁹ Elson, *Perspectives on Green Belt Local Plans*, pp. 39–41.

¹³⁰ Cited by Elson, *Perspectives on Green Belt Local Plans*, pp. 39-41.

¹³¹ Martin Elson and Roderick Macdonald, 'Urban Growth Management: Distinctive Solutions in the Celtic Countries?', R. Macdonald and H. Thomas (eds.) *Nationality and Planning in Scotland and Wales* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1997), pp. 159-80 (p. 164).

¹³² Lloyd and Peel, 'Green Belts in Scotland', p. 641.

¹³³ Skinner, *Situation Report*, p. 33.

CCS examined the potential of the green belt for recreation in 1975, and identified several concerns over unsuitable development that led them to assert that a protective role for green belts was insufficient, and that they needed active and positive intervention to reach their full landscape potential.¹³⁴ At a symposium in 1982, a CCS speaker asserted that 'it is now well accepted in land-use planning for countryside close to towns that such land has an important rôle to play in providing space for outdoor recreation'.¹³⁵ A similar conclusion was reached in relation to recreational forestry, with Hazelhead – anachronistically excluded from 'the countryside' in 1968 - providing a Scottish example of the successful urban fringe forest areas of Amsterdam and Copenhagen.¹³⁶

Throughout its lifetime, CCS wrestled with the problem of its country parks' relationship to urban populations and with green belt policy. In England and Wales, from 1974 onwards, higher levels of grant were offered for urban fringe locations than for remoter sites, but although Scotland never followed suit in this respect, Scottish government policy stressed the importance of the urban fringe as a location for recreation, both to preserve its character and to promote healthier lifestyle outcomes.¹³⁷ CCS' own policy, and its speakers at various events in the early years, confirmed that there were advantages to urban fringe locations, even though its designations suggested a broader view. The 1974 *Park System* was thus a radical departure from this policy,

¹³⁴ Lloyd and Peel, 'Green Belts in Scotland' p. 649.

¹³⁵ J. W. Mackay, 'Recreation in the Countryside Around Towns', in A. B. Cruikshank (ed.), *Where Town Meets Country: Problems of Peri-Urban Areas in Scotland* (Aberdeen: Aberdeen University Press, 1982), pp. 21–29 (p. 21).

¹³⁶ J. D. Matthews, 'Forest Land and Recreation in Scotland', in J. Tivy and G. Dickinson (eds.), 'Land Resources for Recreation in Scotland: Report on Symposium held in St Andrews' (Unpublished conference report, 1976), pp. 10–13 (p. 13).

¹³⁷ Martin Elson, *Green Belts: Conflict Mediation in the Urban Fringe* (London: Heinemann, 1986), p. 183; Lloyd and Peel, 'Green Belts in Scotland', p. 648.

even if it was merely legitimising what had already occurred and following the lead given by the Select Committee. And it must be said that CCS' attitude to designation, and its representatives' declarations at conferences, maintained the organisation's original line that the urban fringe was a good place to locate this type of provision. As CCS became more interested in countryside around towns after Dower's 1976 paper, it also began to share the SDD view that recreational provision offered a means of improving the amenity value of this countryside.¹³⁸

The Scottish country park programme thus exemplifies much of the wider debate around the purpose, and legitimate use, of the green belt. Using the green belt for recreation would satisfy Elson, who advocated the urban fringe location for inclusion reasons, and also Taylor and Fladmark, who saw recreation as a way of protecting the integrity and attractiveness of the green belt.¹³⁹ But if we accept Shoard's characterisation of the green belt as an aesthetically compromised space, country parks could do little to improve things.¹⁴⁰ The Scottish evidence is mixed: some of the more popular Scottish sites are urban fringe, but other popular sites are more remote. Factors such as convenience, site facilities and intrinsic quality proved more important to users, and a green belt location was insufficient on its own to meet users' aspirations.

New provision or upgrades?

The initial intention was to provide both new and existing provision; Fred Willey had pointed out that some country parks would already exist whereas others would need

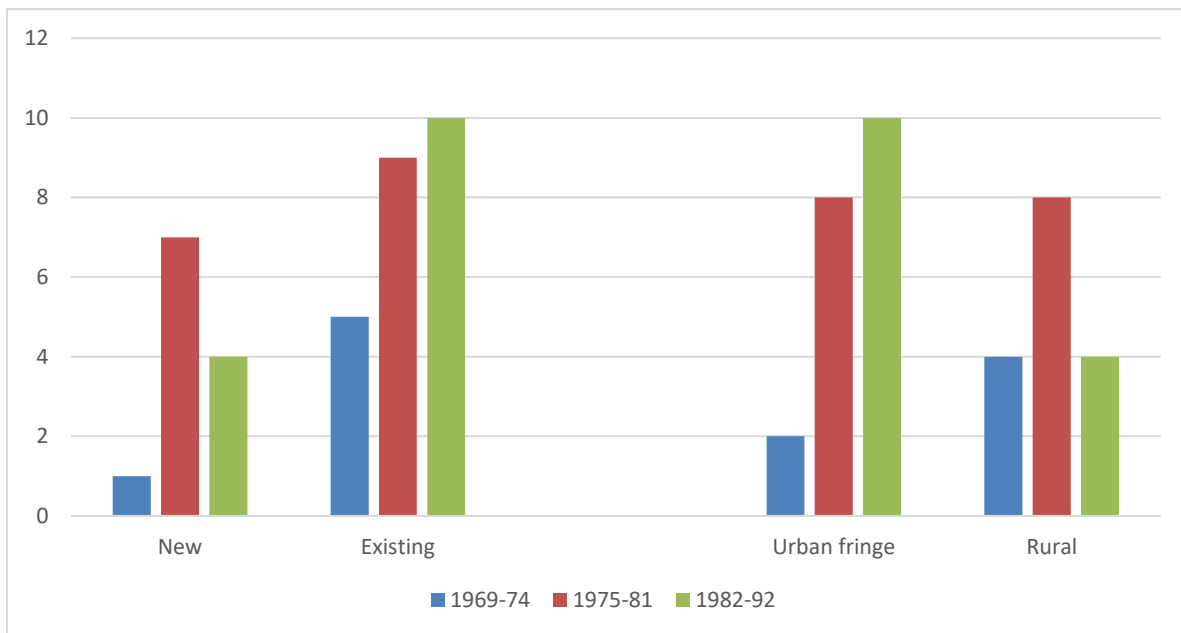
¹³⁸ J.M. Fladmark, *The Countryside Around Towns: A Scottish Programme of Partnership and Action* (Perth: CCS, 1988), p. 4; Edinburgh: National Records of Scotland: Countryside Commission for Scotland Archive: CCS3/28: Strategy and Programme 1987-92, p. 4.

¹³⁹ Elson, *Perspectives on Green Belt*, p. 34; Taylor and Fladmark, *The Countryside Around Towns*, p. 33.

¹⁴⁰ Shoard, 'Recreation in the Rural/Urban Interface', p. 1.

to be created.¹⁴¹ Over its lifetime, CCS enabled the creation of twelve new parks, while designating twice as many pre-existing public open spaces. It designated 20 sites that could be considered urban fringe, against 16 that were in a rural setting. Seven new parks were on the urban fringe, and five were new rural parks; its work in upgrading existing public open space was split evenly between the two types of location. Combining this information with the overall chronology of designation generates this picture:

Fig. 5.7: Country Park origin and location by time period, 1967-92



Source: *Edinburgh: National Records of Scotland: Countryside Commission of Scotland Archive CCS9/63: Country Park Register, augmented by data from appendix. The date used is the date of formal registration; provisional designations are ignored.*

The emphasis shifted from new provision at the beginning towards upgrades in later years, with just five existing sites designated in the initial period, rising to nine in the

¹⁴¹ 'The Countryside in 1970', *Proceedings 1965*, p. 103.

middle years and ten in the final phase of park designation, indicating that CCS was much less able to stimulate the creation of new sites after 1981 and became more supportive of improvements to existing facilities, an approach that was consistent with its 1982 policy document as well as with closer scrutiny of local authority spending. But in this latter period, it was also more reliant on urban fringe sites, despite having relaxed its policy to allow park development anywhere that a need could be evidenced. The policy shifts thus had a much greater impact on the balance between new and upgrade sites than they did on location. Only in the middle phase of park creation was there an even balance between new and existing sites, and between urban fringe and genuinely rural sites. Since many local authorities already owned countryside sites, new sites carrying additional financial commitments were much less appealing than chances to upgrade facilities at existing sites, reducing capital expenditure obligations, and allowing them to improve their own assets, largely at central government expense.

Of the twelve new sites created under the legislation, four were wholly or partly land reclamation sites, where separate, and generous, funding was available to restore contaminated land, including derelict buildings, to a basic standard. These sites carried few land acquisition costs, and were cheaper for a local authority to develop than a comparable brand-new site might have been; all were urban fringe sites and thus met the recognised need to facelift the environment in which people lived. Three other new sites were conversions of water authority reservoir land into recreational space largely based on the water already *in situ*; again, the expense of this change of use was much less than that involved in creating an entirely new facility, while acquisition costs could be avoided since the land was already in public ownership. There was nothing inherently wrong with the opportunistic use of countryside funding

in this way, but the locations of these new facilities were determined not by any strategic sense that recreational space might be of value in these localities, but by the availability of land, water, or additional sources of funding.

Social inclusion

An important dimension of the urban fringe issue was social inclusion. As chapter 2 has shown, the major cities of Scotland were in the process of developing large peripheral housing estates, to improve the living conditions of their economically disadvantaged populations; the urban fringes were far from uniformly suburban in nature and their residents included many who were economically unlikely to be car owners. Remotely situated country parks targeting motorists were not likely to attract an audience in these communities, but urban fringe parks accessible on foot or by public transport could. In 1971, Arthur Oldham in Glasgow had been one of the few who recognised this need, advocating country park status for three sites – none of which was immediately accepted – principally because they served disadvantaged populations.¹⁴² The time for this way of thinking about country parks had not yet come; even by 1980, the sites thus far designated as country parks in the Glasgow area '[we]re too far from home or work to attract... users without cars'.¹⁴³

Over the course of the 1970s, perceptions of recreation shifted away from a threat to be contained or managed and towards an understanding that recreation was a force for good, promoting health and social benefits. A Select Committee report in 1973 even went so far as to describe it as 'part of the general fabric of the social services',

¹⁴² D. Sutherland, *Country Parks for Glasgow* (Dartington, DART, 1971), p. 467.

¹⁴³ Tourism and Recreation Research Unit, *Study of Four Parks in and around Glasgow* (Edinburgh: University of Edinburgh, 1980), p. 27.

prompting concern that the country park programme had essentially benefitted relatively affluent middle-class car owners, to the exclusion of those with more limited means or from other socio-economic groups.¹⁴⁴ Such information as could be derived from visitor surveys tended to confirm this, with those surveyed largely conforming to a single picture, as Elson had found: country park visitors in England were predominantly middle-class car owners, while semi-skilled and unskilled people were much less well represented.¹⁴⁵ His findings confirmed those of Anthony Veal a few years earlier, which identified a much higher likelihood of visiting the countryside among white-collar groups than among blue-collar groups.¹⁴⁶ They also echoed the conclusion of the first-ever survey of recreation, that car ownership was the major determinant of participation.¹⁴⁷

Scotland also had its concerns over social exclusion, and Susan Walker's review of Scottish visitor surveys from 1977-1985 indicated a similar tendency for country park visiting to be more commonplace among white-collar car owners, although she also uncovered some important differences relating to site location, accessibility, and activities.¹⁴⁸ In particular, she found greatly increased levels of blue-collar participation at Beecraigs and Polkemmet, two West Lothian sites; nearly half of all visitors to Polkemmet were from blue-collar socio-economic groups.¹⁴⁹ She attributed this partly to the local socio-demographics – both parks were situated in areas with

¹⁴⁴ PP: House of Lords Sessional Papers IX, 1972-73, pp. 1807-1822: Select Committee on Sport and Leisure, First Report, p. 1810; Rhona Rapoport and Michael Dower, 'Local Authority Leisure Provision: Relating to People's Needs', *Local Government Studies*, 5.4 (1979), 17-30 (p. 21).

¹⁴⁵ Elson, *Review and Evaluation*, p. 38.

¹⁴⁶ A. J. Veal, *Countryside Recreation in England and Wales in 1973: Data from the General Household Survey* (Birmingham, University of Birmingham, 1973), cited by Elson, *Review and Evaluation*, p. 48.

¹⁴⁷ Sillitoe, *Planning for Leisure*, p. 18. Several other surveys reached similar conclusions.

¹⁴⁸ Susan Walker, *Countryside Recreation in Central Scotland: A Review of Market Surveys in Strathclyde and Lothian Regions, 1977-85* (Perth: CCS/Andersen Semens Houston, 1988), p. 21.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p 28.

economically disadvantaged populations – but she also believed that the activities on offer, which included open access golf and a bar at Polkemmet, and fishing at Beecraigs, appealed more to this segment of the population.¹⁵⁰ These parks were thus more successful because they provided what local people wanted or needed. The Tourism and Recreation Research Unit at Edinburgh University concluded that, while remoter parks in Scotland were recognisably ‘socially selective’, those on the urban fringe attracted audiences much more representative of their local populations.¹⁵¹ A study at Strathclyde Country Park indicated that 82% of its visitors lived in Hamilton or Motherwell, the two relatively disadvantaged towns on either side of the facility.¹⁵² Surveys at Lochore Meadows also suggested a high take-up from local people, and hence a more blue-collar audience than was typical in remoter locations.¹⁵³ There is thus evidence to support the idea that social exclusion was less pervasive in Scottish parks, and this can be at least partly attributed to the intermittent preference for urban fringe locations.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 31–32.

¹⁵¹ Tourism and Recreation Research Unit, *Four Parks in and around Glasgow*, p. 135.

¹⁵² Tourism and Recreation Research Unit, *Strathclyde Park 1977: Monitoring the Use of a Country Park* (Edinburgh: University of Edinburgh, 1978), p. xxvii.

¹⁵³ Markinch: Fife Regional Council Archives: Fife Regional Council: *Visitor Survey of Lomonds Regional Park Summer 1978* (Glenrothes, FRC, 1978), p. 16; Tourism and Recreation Research Unit, *Strathclyde Park*, p. xxvii.



Figure 5.8: Golf facilities at Polkemmet Country Park (Author's collection)

Feasibility studies and management planning

Feasibility studies were generally prepared at the outset of a country park project, and were partly aimed at convincing funders that a proposal was appropriate and sustainable. Some were prepared internally by the applicant, as with Stirlingshire's appraisal of Muiravonside, while in other cases external consultants were appointed.¹⁵⁴ They were liable to over-sell the potential of a country park, but CCS welcomed them, at the very least as an indicator that an applicant was serious enough about an idea to spend money validating it, or in providing independent evidence for elected councillors of the viability of projects they would have to part-finance.¹⁵⁵

¹⁵⁴ Stirling County Council, 'Muiravonside Country Park: Feasibility Study' (Unpublished report: Stirling County Planning Department, nd; c. 1978).

¹⁵⁵ Thornton, 'Policy-Making', p. 33.

Management plans, setting out the priorities of the site and measures by which these were to be achieved, were part of the appraisal process from the early days of country parks, but were never actually formalised as a policy criterion. By 1982, CCS had recognised both the importance of a management plan and the variable quality of those already submitted, and set out its expectations in this respect in formal guidance. Although never labelled as a 'policy' as such, this document did signal new priorities, for instance in expecting country parks to balance the recreational needs of visitors against the demands of nature conservation.¹⁵⁶ This is an interesting emphasis that suggests a growing awareness of a risk that intensive recreational use of country parks might threaten their natural and scenic qualities, the very same threat the parks had originally been conceived to remove; country parks were no longer simply expendable countryside to protect more valued areas, but now intrinsically valued in themselves and in need of protection from unmanaged use. Heritage assets were also given prominence in management planning, with park owners urged to seek specialist advice on conserving historic structures.¹⁵⁷

However, as the Brodick example illustrates, the requirement for management planning was not rigorously or uniformly enforced. Brodick was of course an NTS property and its grounds were an important part of its attraction; no doubt CCS was confident that there were already detailed arrangements in place. But Brodick was not the only exemption from the requirement for a management plan; Drumpellier, a recreation area with extensive sports facilities, was designated in 1984 without any management plan in place, as was Polkemmet the following year.¹⁵⁸ The excellence

¹⁵⁶ CCS: *Management Plans for Country Parks*, pp. 1, 2.

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 1-2.

¹⁵⁸ Edinburgh: National Records of Scotland: Countryside Commission for Scotland Archive CCS3/24: Minutes of meeting 10 July 1984; CCS3/25: Minutes of meeting 14 May 1985.

of the concept did not mean that CCS was any more consistent in applying the requirement; as with many other criteria, management plans could be negotiable.

Designation

A further important dimension was the question of designation. In its 1972 review, CCS had noted that in England & Wales, a site had to secure designation before grant could be paid, whereas in Scotland grant was payable without any such requirement. Tom Huxley, CCS' Assistant Director, had at one time argued for the English approach, but the Scottish system was soundly based, since pre-1975 Scottish authorities' revenue base and cash flow would have effectively prevented many of them from funding development ahead of receiving grant support.¹⁵⁹ CCS believed, correctly, that some local authorities in Scotland were successfully obtaining grant funding for countryside projects but not going on to seek designation, and Huxley had to concede that some of these sites were 'functioning very well along country park lines'.¹⁶⁰

The intrinsic value of designation was also called into question; as early as 1969, CCS had recognised that there was 'no marked advantage to applicant authorities for parks to be recognised as country parks', and acknowledged that it had yet to find a way of making designation meaningful.¹⁶¹ In 1980 it was still struggling with this, admitting that 'the benefits [of designation] are not easy to explain'.¹⁶² Designation permitted the use of the 'country park' label, entitled the park to display a sign denoting CCS'

¹⁵⁹ Edinburgh: National Records of Scotland: Scottish Development Department Archive DD12/3456: File note by A S Neilson, SDD, 18 February 1975.

¹⁶⁰ Edinburgh: National Records of Scotland: Countryside Commission for Scotland Archive CCS3/2: Minutes of meeting 8 March 1972.

¹⁶¹ Edinburgh: National Records of Scotland: Countryside Commission for Scotland Archive CCS6/1: T Huxley, 'Progress on the creation of Country Parks in Scotland: A review', paper for meeting 2 June 1969.

¹⁶² Edinburgh: National Records of Scotland: Scottish Development Department Archive DD12/3456: 'A Review of Country Parks', p. 3.

involvement, and provided whatever reassurance the public were able to derive from these; there were no other obvious advantages. But it had some *cachet*, since Dundee City Council believed a designated Camperdown Country Park might be better placed to secure future finance.¹⁶³

A further dimension of designation arose in relation to privately-owned sites. The legislation permitted sites not in public ownership to be funded, and did not prohibit them being designated as country parks. When CCS gave this aspect some consideration in 1984, they noted that England had 27 privately-owned country parks, whilst in Scotland only the two NTS parks, at Culzean and Brodick, had been allowed to use the terminology. There were some privately-owned sites that were country parks in all but designation, part-funded by CCS, but CCS never encouraged their registration.¹⁶⁴ This is curious; a more relaxed approach to the use of the terminology would have further expanded the portfolio of sites, with no additional burden, financial or otherwise, on the organisation.

Funding

Over its 25-year lifetime, CCS invested over £11.5 million in country park capital projects.¹⁶⁵ This spend enabled delivery of 36 parks, and Figure 5.9 shows the level of capital investment CCS made in 34 of these.¹⁶⁶

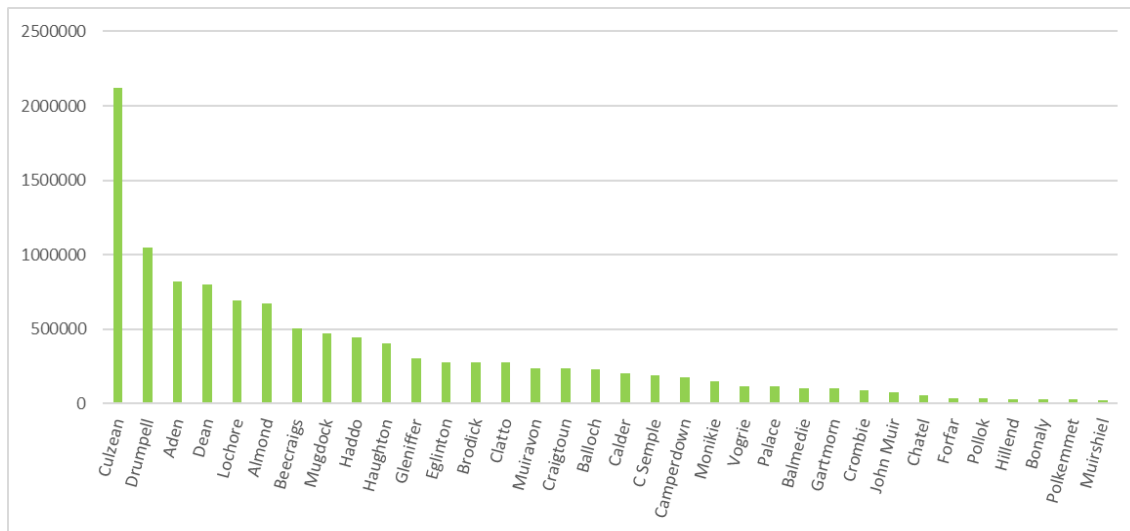
¹⁶³ Edinburgh: National Records of Scotland: Scottish Development Department Archive DD23/692: City of Dundee Council report on Camperdown Country Park, 24 August 1982, p. 64.

¹⁶⁴ Edinburgh: National Records of Scotland: Countryside Commission for Scotland Archive CCS 3/24: Papers for meeting 11 September 1984.

¹⁶⁵ Campbell, 'The Wood not the Trees', Appendix A. The amount quoted represents aggregated grants at 1996 equivalent values.

¹⁶⁶ Campbell's data omits Townhill Woods Country Park, a late arrival into the portfolio. Strathclyde is omitted to allow the rest of the chart to be viewed more clearly.

Fig. 5.9: Amount of CCS capital investment in 34 country parks, 1969 -1992

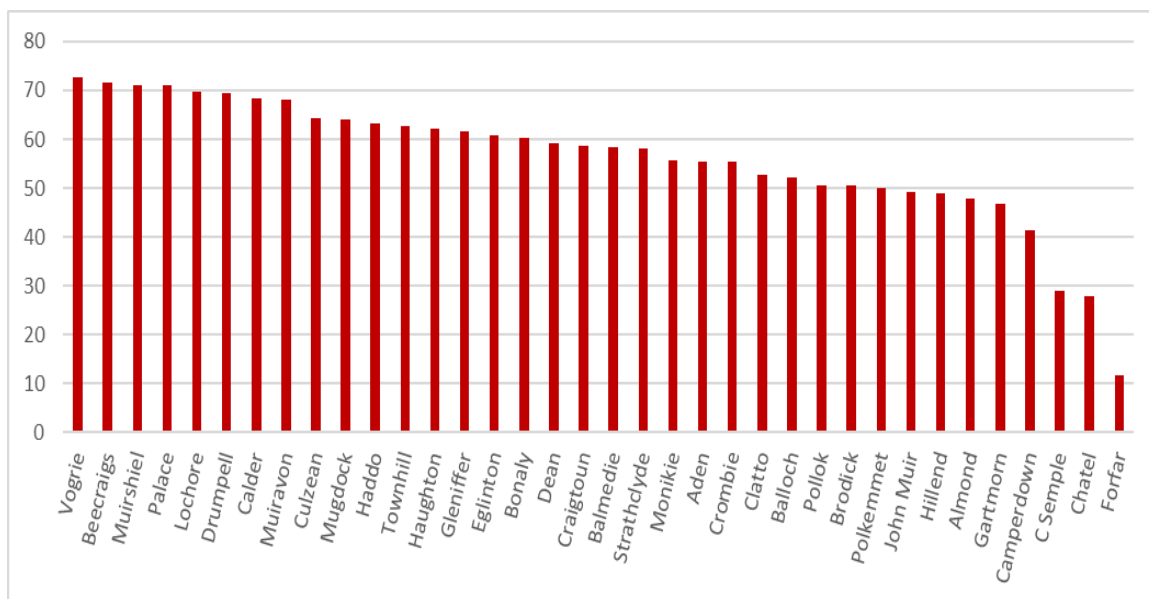


Source: Campbell, *'The Wood, Not the Trees'*, Appendix A. All financial amounts have been standardised at 1996 equivalents.

The amount of capital support provided varied as widely as any other aspect of country park provision; Culzean received over £2.1 million from CCS, and Drumpellier received more than £1 million, while five further parks secured in excess of £500,000 each. On the other hand, Muirshiel was one of four parks to receive less than £25,000. Overall, investment tended to be on the low side, and ten of the parks required a CCS capital subvention of less than £100,000 during the organisation's lifetime.

The amount of grant support naturally varied according to the need of the site, but was also driven in part by the availability of funds at the time of application. As Fig. 5.10 shows, the maximum proportion payable by CCS, originally set in legislation at 75%, was not always necessary for a project to move to completion.

Fig. 5.10: Proportion of eligible spend funded by CCS, 1969-1992



Source: Campbell, 'The Wood not the Trees', Appendix A. All financial amounts have been standardised at 1996 equivalents.

Although support approaching 75% of eligible spend was provided to several sites, subvention at between 50% and 60% was more the norm. Vogrie, Beecraigs, Muirshiel and Palacerigg received the highest proportion of support at over 70% of eligible costs in each case; most others received capital support of 50% or more. Three sites received much lower levels of contribution, with Forfar Loch only funded to the tune of 12%. CCS was equally generous to new sites and upgraded facilities; an average subvention of 56% applies in both cases. Support for rural sites was a little higher, averaging 59%, against 54% for urban fringe sites, but the difference is not especially marked.

Conclusion

Throughout the country park period, CCS was hamstrung by four key issues largely outside its control: the lack of a provable or definable demand for this type of provision, the lack of clarity as to what it was expected to provide, the fragmentation of responsibility across the public sector, and the absence of executive powers to control delivery. Opportunities to resolve issues arose, both before and during CCS' lifetime, but these openings were either overlooked or only partly capitalised on, leaving CCS in the traditionally difficult position of holding responsibilities for which it was accountable, but lacking both the authority and the capacity to address them.

The question of demand has permeated this discussion. Demand was assumed, but never proven, and the anecdotal evidence put before bodies like the 'Countryside in 1970' was taken as being not only a true reflection of the position but also as applicable throughout the UK, when the reality in Scotland was, as several commentators noted, different.¹⁶⁷ 'Fourth Wave' had suggested that a situation some were already finding intolerable would worsen significantly, and the justification this provided for intervention made the fundamental rationale for the country park very difficult to challenge.¹⁶⁸ Thus the 1970 CCS country park policy claimed to meet 'the demand for countryside recreation facilities that is known to exist'; by 1973, this assertion had been dropped, suggesting that even CCS itself was becoming less convinced.¹⁶⁹

¹⁶⁷ For example, Patmore, *Land and Leisure*, p. 5; John Moir, 'The Designation of Valued Landscapes in Scotland, in R. Macdonald and H. Thomas (eds.): *Nationality and Planning in Scotland and Wales* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1997), pp. 203-42 (p. 232); CCS, *Conserving Scotland's Countryside* (Perth: CCS, 1972), unpaginated.

¹⁶⁸ Dower, 'Fourth Wave'.

¹⁶⁹ Edinburgh: National Records of Scotland: Countryside Commission for Scotland archive: CCS3/6: 'Policy on Country Parks for Scotland', March 1970, p. 2; CCS, *A Policy for Country Parks: Information Sheet No. 4* (Perth, CCS, 1973).

Similarly, the feasibility study for Lochore Meadows was able to claim that 'the question to be answered is not whether a demand exists, but merely how large it is'.¹⁷⁰ But CCS' difficulties in securing deliverable country park proposals in its early years should have raised questions about the reality of demand, which was not so pressing as to motivate local authorities to come forward in large numbers. Demand was also immensely complex, but was rarely recognised in this way at a policy level. As Sillitoe highlighted early on, it was a multifaceted issue that required significant segmentation – standard statistical samples would only reliably identify the most significant activities – while Coppock and Duffield highlighted the ways in which particular activities tended to create particular user demographics. These perspectives were correct, and simply noting demand without acknowledging its complexity impeded both value for money and notions of inclusion.¹⁷¹ However, the alternative, intuitive approach had unexpected support from the accountant Peter Burnham, who presented it as an acceptable alternative to more detailed study, even as he also encouraged increased appraisal and data collection.¹⁷²

In practice, the supply side was more significant in determining both the numbers and the location of country parks. This was entirely foreseeable, as Miles and Seabrooke have pointed out; land availability generally takes precedence over consideration of land use, and even where need is established, the availability of an appropriate site will inevitably limit the choice of location.¹⁷³ The Scottish country park story, where

¹⁷⁰ J.R. Herbert *et al*, 'Lochore Meadows Reclamation: Initial Report - Opportunities for Development' (Unpublished report, Edinburgh: Land Use Consultants, 1969), p.2.

¹⁷¹ Sillitoe, *Planning for Leisure*, p. 119; Coppock and Duffield, *Spatial Analysis*, pp. 36-37.

¹⁷² Peter Burnham, 'A Review of the Problems and Opportunities' in *Economic Aspects of Countryside Recreation Management*, Report on CRRAG conference at Durham 1976 (London: Janssen Services, 1976), pp 160-167 (pp. 161, 166). Burnham worked for Coopers and Lybrand.

¹⁷³ C. Miles and W. Seabrooke, *Recreational Land Management* (London, Spon, 1977) pp. 10–11.

several local authorities owned countryside sites already used as public open space, or capable of deployment in that way, is further evidence in support of this contention. Genuinely new facilities would impose land acquisition costs (and perhaps also associated legal and planning issues) which funders were unwilling to countenance in these circumstances, as well as greater expenditure in landscaping and equipping the sites; it was more cost-effective to upgrade existing public open space, or to use other landholdings (as at Aden, and on the reservoir sites) and develop them as parks. From CCS' and SDD's perspective, funding upgrades for existing sites allowed the numbers of country parks to be increased at lower unit cost. It was also less controversial to take such an approach, since few people could object to improving existing facilities, or to reclaiming unsightly derelict land.

The prominence of the supply side, however, meant that, whatever CCS may have claimed as its aspiration, it was never able to plan for strategically located sites, and this echoes Patmore's frustration with the English outcome.¹⁷⁴ CCS was forced to accept that site locations were determined in advance either by local authorities' existing landholdings or by the availability of land that could be recycled from other uses. There is no evidence that CCS ever identified an area needing a country park based on levels of demand, but even if it had, it possessed no powers to create a country park in that location. It was entirely dependent on local authority initiative, and before local government reorganisation in 1975 local authorities had neither reason nor resource to act strategically; they were motivated most strongly by the benefit to their own ratepayers. Duffield and Owen were stating the reality of the situation when they asserted that 'countryside recreation is...still free to obey the basic market laws

¹⁷⁴ Patmore, 'Recreation and Resources', pp. 197, 199.

of supply and demand and is largely unfettered by planned provision'.¹⁷⁵ The proximity map (**Fig. 5.6**) demonstrates the outcome of a responsive, unplanned approach to provision.

CCS was also greatly hindered by the lack of clarity over what country parks were expected to look like and provide. No pilot had been undertaken to test whether the 'honeypot' approach would work, and there was no clarity about how the initial intention might be achieved, nor indeed about whether the intention itself was soundly based. Nor was there any useful research on what facilities and opportunities people might look for, or respond well to, in a country park. CCS' early conclusion that the label would designate a function, rather than a landscape form or a particular style of content, was a recognition of the inevitable, allowing any countryside landscape to qualify so long as it offered recreational opportunity. CCS was never able to assert a clear definition of what was actually wanted from a country park, and this, coupled with its increasingly urgent need to have more sites designated, meant that the term 'country park' ended up embracing a hugely varied visitor offer. As this chapter has shown, CCS was also willing to bend, or even to subvert, its own rules to allow park projects into the fold, further broadening eligibility (and extending confusion) through precedent. While the branding of countryside specifically for recreation may provide evidence of Cloke's commodification, the inconsistent outcome favours the arguments of Glyptis and Harrison concerning lack of identity.¹⁷⁶

¹⁷⁵ Duffield *et al*, *Leisure + Countryside* =, p. 5.

¹⁷⁶ Cloke, 'The Countryside as Commodity', p. 55; Harrison, *Countryside Recreation*, p. 105; Glyptis, *Countryside Recreation*, p. 89.

CCS was essentially given an almost blank sheet of paper on which to define what it sought from the term 'country park'. This may seem to have been an advantage, giving CCS freedom to write its own definition. But CCS was a new organisation that needed to establish itself within a framework where it was not entirely welcome, and had to move cautiously. It had little freedom of independent action; it also felt it had to be in broad step with policy in England. And since it really had no clear view of what it was supposed to provide, there was perhaps a degree of inevitability about its assumption of a responsive, rather than a pro-active, rôle. It is important too to remember that country parks were not the only thing CCS was expected to deliver; it needed council co-operation when it was addressing the rest of its workload as well, and could not afford to alienate its most important mechanism for delivering its responsibilities.

The blank sheet of paper also failed to clarify how the system for creating country parks would inter-relate with other associated organisations. This aspect came to a head in relation to sport, where the fragmentation referred to earlier was perpetuated rather than eased. The possibility that formal sports provision might be attractive to a local authority investing in its open space seems not to have occurred to the legislative drafters, nor to the policy-makers, and although the guidance made it clear that facilities for organised sport could not be funded, it failed to explain what this meant in practice. This left considerable room for doubt which local authorities were naturally happy to put to the test. The confusion extended to allowing country park funding to be used for watersports but not for organised land-based sports activities, without clarifying why such a distinction was being made. What looked initially like a definitive

policy on sport was anything but, and the possibility of bringing clarity through formal co-operation between the different funders was a further missed opportunity.

The SDD could itself have taken the lead; prior to local government reorganisation, it was the only body other than CCS in a position to take a strategic overview. As early as 1970, Tony Travis was making the point that ‘the planning of recreation resources must be carried out at a regional scale...[and] must be integrated with transportation planning and with physical and economic planning’.¹⁷⁷ This integration, however, only began to take shape with the regional structural planning introduced after local government reorganisation in 1975. Whilst collaboration did take place on some projects, it was not commonplace, and most country park projects involved only the applicant authority and CCS. This in turn limited the horizons of those planning country parks to the extent to which different departments within local authorities were able and willing to co-operate on zoning different land uses, and to integrate internally on issues of funding and site management. Michael Dower concluded that the variation in country park provision in relation to urban populations ‘has occurred because...the resources were there, rather than because they were necessarily in the right place to serve the demand’.¹⁷⁸ David Groome perceived a tendency to create parks regardless of either facility or location, and to ignore any impact on levels of use elsewhere – a philosophy that can be summarised as ‘If you build it, they will come’ – and this thesis demonstrates its applicability in Scotland.¹⁷⁹

¹⁷⁷ A.S. Travis, *Recreation Planning for the Clyde: Firth of Clyde Study Phase Two* (Edinburgh: Scottish Tourist Board, 1970), para. 1.1.

¹⁷⁸ Dower and Aitken, *Countryside Around Towns*, p. 32.

¹⁷⁹ Quotation adapted from *Field of Dreams* (Dir: Phil Alden Robinson, Universal Studios, 1989); David Groome, *Planning and Rural Recreation*, pp. 55-57.

CCS was hindered severely by its own lack of basic information and the opaqueness of its brief, but the absence of executive powers proved critical. It placed the organisation completely at the mercy of both the SDD, which monitored CCS closely in its initial stages and had significant input into its decisions, and the local authorities, distrustful of CCS' motives, but to whom the legislation had given the initiative. CCS could promote the country park concept, but could never initiate provision. Until 1981, CCS also lacked autonomy over its own budget allocation; allowing it to manage the purse-strings would at least have given it some meaningful influence, rather than simply acting as a gatekeeper for the SDD.

CCS might also plead a fifth element over which it had little or no control: finance. It is certainly true that the initial allocation of funds was more limited than had been expected, that Strathclyde Country Park threatened to consume all the resources available, and that the message from HM Treasury throughout CCS' lifetime, and under both Labour and Conservative administrations, was one of restraint. But it also must be said that CCS was able to be generous in relation to projects it supported; although there were projects rejected for financial reasons, and parks whose funding was more limited than others, few parks received less than 50% support towards their eligible spend, and the actual amounts of grant paid out in some cases were very substantial indeed. No doubt CCS would have liked more freedom over its grant-making, but it would also have to counter the argument, at least before 1975, that there were relatively few projects coming forward to justify an increased budget.

These external factors were all largely beyond CCS' capacity to resolve, having been made part of the system through which CCS could come into existence. But there were opportunities to challenge, and even to address, some of these issues as time

moved on, which the organisation failed to take. The first of these came with the definition of countryside: CCS missed the opportunity this exercise offered to establish the relationship between countryside and green belt, an issue which proved of enormous significance to the urban local authorities. A coherent approach to this question from the outset could have greatly assisted both CCS and its applicants, and would perhaps have allowed the organisation to have welcomed urban fringe provision; it could then immediately have had two or three of Arthur Oldham's Glasgow fringe possibilities, as well as others later. The organisation was not helped by differing views among its commissioners and staff in this respect, nor by their apparent freedom to express these as conference speakers, to the confusion of audiences. Fifteen separate CCS pronouncements on the urban fringe have been identified between 1970 and 1991, and although the balance of opinion in these leant towards using the urban fringe, they were by no means singing in harmony with one another.

Inconsistency is also visible in CCS' actions on the ground. Its initial position, strongly favouring location close to towns, and requiring access on foot, was undermined immediately when it designated first Culzean in rural Ayrshire, 50 miles from the conurbations, and then Muirshiel in rural Renfrewshire, isolated up eight miles of country lane and realistically only accessible by car. And having decided that accepted thinking would lead it away from the urban fringe, it then proceeded to designate several urban fringe sites, and amended the otherwise immutable definition of 'countryside' to enable the registration of Calderglen, on the fringe of East Kilbride New Town.

Opportunity was also missed to clarify the issue of supply and demand, first by suppressing the potentially useful 1968 report on existing provision, and later by

allowing STARPS to die quietly in the mid-seventies. STARPS offered great and holistic possibilities, not least in confronting fragmentation through bringing together the various disparate bodies concerned with sport and recreation. It promised to identify the bigger issues affecting provision, and providing tools for addressing these in a standardised and holistic manner, as well as for forecasting. STARPS also offered to explore issues of social inclusion, and the role of recreation within tourism and the wider economic development of localities with recreation sites, both of which were issues CCS struggled with. Its approach sat well within the strategic responsibilities that arose from local government reorganisation in 1975. It appears to have been exactly the tool CCS, and its counterpart bodies, needed.

Missed opportunity and inconsistency also characterised CCS' approach to sustainability. Management plans were a sound idea, helping local authorities to clarify priorities, allocate responsibilities and resources, and manage parks more effectively. But when councils found themselves unable to produce the document to the level required, CCS lowered the standard, rather than seeking to increase councils' capacity to manage their open space. It further weakened its case for management plans by exempting some sites from the requirement.

Linked to this issue of standards and management is the question of designation. Jenny Smith has identified meanings for designation in landscape protection, resource prioritisation, and visitor promotion, and sees it as part of the commodification process, referenced in the introduction, that she characterises as 'post-productivism'.¹⁸⁰ Although demarcated both spatially and by the application of criteria, designation has

¹⁸⁰ Jenny Smith, *Protected Areas: Origins, Criticisms and Contemporary Issues for Outdoor Recreation* (Birmingham: Birmingham City University, 2013), pp. 1-3.

essentially been a top-down process in the gift of the designator, rather than one negotiated with local interests. For CCS, country park designation would never mean protection (other than vicariously) but they did use it as a way of focussing resource, and tried to encourage promotion. Generally, CCS found itself unable to assert designation as anything more than a desirable state of affairs, admitting that it found it difficult to specify the benefit it conferred. And yet at various times it connected designation with criteria, such as through the insistence on a minimum level of facilities, or the requirement for a management plan, so designation could have been used to communicate both a standard of provision and a level of quality in maintaining that provision. This would in turn have provided assurance to the public, and a quality benchmark for the provider, in much the same way as Green Flag status is used today to demonstrate a local authority's commitment to quality green space. The local authority opposition to CCS made it very difficult for the organisation to assert standards, still less to verify ongoing maintenance; but this could surely have been overcome through judicious conditions attached to funding, and through the provision of suitable powers allowing CCS to confer (or withdraw) a status which would then have had some significance. CCS may have preferred to allow itself a less consistent application of standards; designation's value was certainly inhibited by the drive to increase the number of parks.

It could reasonably be argued that the most significant action CCS took in relation to country parks was the decision not to seek a country park solution to the Glen Nevis problem. This demonstrated a completely new way of looking at recreation in Scotland, rejecting the honeypot principle and recognising that any old countryside would no longer suffice, especially in relation to landscapes with iconic associations. It was a

very positive move, and although it did not stop the country park programme in its tracks, it did highlight the potential for more nuanced approaches to visitor management. This was what had really been needed from the outset, and had the initial problem been considered in terms of visitor management rather than diversion, a much more effective use of resources (albeit perhaps with fewer country parks) might have resulted. This justifies the scholarly approach to countryside recreation that sees country parks as part of a larger body of countryside policy, but also highlights the intrinsic difficulty, raised by Curry and others, of a policy focussed on site provision, as opposed to one centred on the needs and aspirations of potential users.¹⁸¹

¹⁸¹ Curry, *Countryside Recreation*, p. xiii.

Chapter 6: Case Studies: Two Pre-existing Spaces

Introduction

The case studies in this chapter focus on two country parks developed from sites already in use for recreation: Culzean Castle, in Ayrshire, the first country park to be designated, and Chatelherault, in Lanarkshire, almost the last site to receive country park funding from CCS. The purpose of the case studies is to demonstrate how CCS policy was applied in individual instances, allowing comparison between different types of site and across different time periods, to demonstrate the realities and practicalities of policy implementation and to explore in greater depth how the opportunity presented through country park funding was acted upon.

Culzean (1969)

‘The most magnificent [country park] in Britain’.

Mary Waugh¹

Culzean Castle is a large historic house, set in extensive grounds, on the Firth of Clyde fifteen miles south of Ayr. It occupies a prominent cliff-top position with far-reaching views, and is surrounded by a large estate of around 600 acres including formal gardens, ornamental parkland and woodland, as well as ancillary structures and follies. It has become a major Scottish visitor attraction, showcasing a large art collection, antique furnishings, and elaborate interior design, and also offering holiday accommodation to paying guests.



Fig. 6.1: The Cat Gates, Culzean Country Park (Author's collection)

¹ Mary Waugh, *The Shell Book of Country Parks* (Newton Abbot: David and Charles, 1981), p. 211.

The castle came into the ownership of the NTS in 1945, when its owners determined that they could no longer afford to maintain the property in the absence of financial assistance.² Twenty-four years later, in 1969, its policies³ became Scotland's first designated country park, and in 1981 it was described as 'certainly the most magnificent [country park] in Britain.'⁴ This case study examines the impact and implications of this change of status, and serves as a useful case study for the origins of country parks in Scotland, not least because it was the first site to secure this designation and may therefore have acted as a model for future schemes, or helped towards the development of a definition of the country park.

Culzean first emerged publicly as a potential country park in *A Prospect of Culzean*, a short report prepared by the NTS Secretary, Jamie Stormonth Darling, in 1968, in which he described the estate and its history under NTS stewardship. The Trust had been a small body in 1945, with just over 1,000 members, but it had determined to accept the offer of Culzean without the benefit of an endowment to finance its continued maintenance, 'rather than see the whole achievement of Culzean deteriorate or disintegrate'.⁵ In doing so, it inherited what Schomberg Scott described as a 'legacy of neglect' of around 30 years in which the owners' resources had proved insufficient to meet the costs of upkeep.⁶ Stormonth Darling characterised the NTS' decision as an 'act of faith' justified not only by the innate significance of the property but also by the support of members and funding bodies who, over the subsequent 23

² Edinburgh, National Trust for Scotland archives: 01/0041/27/01. J. Stormonth Darling: *A Prospect of Culzean*, second draft, 25th October 1968.

³ 'Policies' is a Scottish term describing the improved grounds surrounding a Scottish country house.

⁴ Waugh, *The Shell Book of Country Parks*, p. 211.

⁵ Edinburgh, National Trust for Scotland archives: 01/0041/27/01: J. Stormonth Darling, *A Prospect of Culzean*, second draft, p. 2.

⁶ Schomberg Scott, quoted by W. Gillespie, *Culzean Country Park Preliminary Report* (Unpublished Report, Glasgow, 1969), p. 1.

years, raised over £300,000 towards its restoration and upkeep.⁷ He also highlighted the importance to the Trust of stimulating the fullest possible use of its properties, not only through casual visits but also through organised and structured activities such as school trips, and expressed his view that Culzean was ideally placed to meet these objectives, by virtue of its proximity to the central belt, through road improvements in west central Scotland, and in anticipation of the proposed New Town at Irvine.⁸

Stormonth Darling's report carefully, and subtly, linked the potential of Culzean with the forthcoming European Conservation Year, with the expanding demand for countryside recreation, with the preference for proximity to population centres, and with the new countryside legislation, thus placing Culzean firmly within the scope of current concerns and promoting its eligibility for initiatives that might have been able to provide financial support. Interestingly, the country park idea, which clearly lay behind the whole proposition, was only introduced in the very last paragraph, almost as an afterthought, although the draft was accompanied by a copy of the legislative clauses on country parks to reinforce the argument.⁹ Stormonth Darling himself credited the landscape architect Elisabeth Beazley with the idea of the country park, and engaged her later to assist with the park's development.¹⁰

There were nevertheless other, practical considerations not being made quite so public. NTS minutes reveal that, notwithstanding the generosity of members, funders, and the general public, by 1961 Culzean was running at a substantial loss.¹¹ The lack

⁷ Edinburgh, National Trust for Scotland archives: 01/0041/27/01. Stormonth Darling, *Prospect of Culzean*, pp. 3-4.

⁸ *Ibid.* pp. 3 - 4.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 4.

¹⁰ J. Stormonth Darling: *Culzean: The Continuing Challenge* (NTS, Edinburgh, 1985), p. 18.

¹¹ Edinburgh, National Trust for Scotland archives: 01/0041/09/01. Executive Committee minutes, 23 June 1961.

of an endowment continued to be felt throughout the decade, in spite of record visitor numbers, and an appeal to raise a £100,000 fund was launched in 1968.¹² Finance was clearly a prominent issue threatening the sustainability of the Culzean project at exactly the time that the Countryside (Scotland) Act came into force and made a new source of potential funding available.

NTS and other papers reveal Stormonth Darling as an inveterate networker, with contacts in high places, and he put these skills to use in canvassing support for the project.¹³ He courted the new Countryside Commission for Scotland, naturally enough, as the body whose endorsement would be essential to securing release of funds, but he had already done a lot of groundwork elsewhere.¹⁴ He organised a visit to the site in October 1968 by Lord Hughes, the Under-Secretary of State for Scotland, in which the possibility of the country park was discussed.¹⁵ He brought his executive committee onside with reassurance that the country park idea would secure the financial future of Culzean, by enabling cost-sharing with CCS and local authorities, but without compromising NTS ownership or responsibilities, and without threatening the existing policy of charges for admission and parking. Noting the legislative requirement for local authority involvement, he had already met with Ayrshire County Council (the local planning authority for the Culzean area); but by December 1968 he had also held exploratory discussions with Ayr and Kilmarnock Burgh Councils, and

¹² Edinburgh, NTS archives: 01/0041/09/01: Report to NTS Executive Committee, 17 September 1968; Stormonth Darling, *Prospect of Culzean*, p. 4; the 'Country Park' appears in the subtitle to the report, but nowhere else until the final paragraph.

¹³ Edinburgh, SDD archives DD12/2846: file on countryside recreation, p. 2.

¹⁴ Edinburgh, National Trust for Scotland archives: 01/0041/27/01: Letter, Stormonth Darling to John Foster, Director, CCS; 27 September 1968.

¹⁵ Edinburgh, National Trust for Scotland archives: 01/0041/09/01: Executive Committee minutes, 9 October 1968.

reported in December unanimous support for the idea in principle.¹⁶ It is clear that he was emphasising the duty placed on local authorities by the legislation to assess the need for country parks, and using this to develop support for his solution.¹⁷ He was no doubt helped by the fact that the SDD had already identified Culzean, in an internal discussion, as a possible location for a country park.¹⁸ CCS also indicated their support, noting that Culzean had 'first-class' potential for development as a country park, but a degree of caution led them to require a feasibility study, which Stormonth Darling persuaded them to fund.¹⁹ He also managed to keep the momentum going by securing the early appointment of William Gillespie and Partners to carry out the study, evidently with an eye on securing significant funding for the 1969-70 financial year, for which public sector budgets were already in course of preparation.²⁰

The consultant's terms of reference illustrate the very limited understanding, in these formative years, of what a country park might need to offer its audience; but also reflect the optimism of those behind the project. Gillespie was cautioned that criteria for funding were yet to be determined, but was nevertheless encouraged to come up with a proposal that would be both comprehensive and imaginative. His study should anticipate an increase in visitor numbers as a result of the appeal of the 'country park' designation, but this should not be allowed to adversely impact on Culzean's essential

¹⁶ Edinburgh, National Trust for Scotland archives: 01/0041/09/01: Executive Committee minutes, 9 October 1978 and 11 December 1968.

¹⁷ Edinburgh, National Trust for Scotland archives 01/0041/27/01: Letter, J. Stormonth Darling to Marquis of Ailsa, 10 January 1969.

¹⁸ Edinburgh, Scottish Development Department archives: DD12/3030: Notes on proposed clauses for Countryside (Scotland) Act, 13 April 1967.

¹⁹ Edinburgh, Countryside Commission for Scotland archives: CCS 6/1: Management and Purposes Committee minutes, 20 December 1968. 01/0041/27/01: Letter from John Foster, Director of CCS, to Stormonth Darling, 27 November 1968.

²⁰ Edinburgh, National Trust for Scotland archives: 01/0041/09/01: Executive Committee minutes, 11 December 1968. Gillespie was actually appointed on 18 November, but this was not formally reported until the next Executive Committee meeting; NTS archives: 01/0041/27/01: Letter, Lord Bute (Chair of NTS) to Stormonth Darling, 2 December 1968

rural character as a 'great family seat'. He was also asked to cost his proposals. For their part, CCS claimed to be open to the possibility of revolutionary ideas on visitor management and admission arrangements, although this was not a view shared by the partners.²¹

Gillespie's study was one of the earliest to be undertaken in relation to a country park, and was not helped by a tight timetable and a lack of clarity as to what might need to be covered – although Stormonth Darling helpfully provided some informal suggestions behind the scenes.²² The report noted the possibility that Culzean's remoteness might make it ineligible for country park designation, but focussed more on potential rather than on trying to second-guess the eventual criteria.²³ It provided a limited, and selective, assessment of alternative recreational facilities in the region, concluding that Culzean could be complementary to these, and suggested a focus on countryside education and conservation as the basis for the country park.²⁴ Visitor management was a prominent aspect; Gillespie noted the popularity of the castle, and the desirability of attracting visitors to explore the wider estate as well as its centrepiece. To assist with this, he suggested locating other attractions and opportunities elsewhere on the site, including the provision of a visitor centre with improved catering facilities. His financial appraisal, however, was very vague, and clouded by uncertainty over the allocation of revenue between the castle and the country park, while his visitor assessments seem to have relied heavily on limited data supplied by NTS, from which unconvincing projections were made. These weaknesses,

²¹ Edinburgh, National Trust for Scotland archives: 01/0041/09/01: Notes for meeting with Gillespie, 22 November 1968.

²² Edinburgh, National Trust for Scotland archives: 01/0041/27/01: Minutes of Culzean Country Park Working Party, 16 December 1968.

²³ W. Gillespie, *Preliminary Report*, p. 11.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 13.

and the failure of the report to address some other CCS interests, were not allowed to impede progress; a press release from NTS early in 1969, widely reported in Scotland, and before formal approval of the feasibility study, indicated that Culzean would probably be the first country park in Scotland.²⁵

The partnership with local authorities was also cemented early in 1969, though not without some challenges. Three local planning authorities were concerned: Ayrshire County Council, which covered the rural areas of the county and included the Culzean estate, and the two Large Burgh authorities of Ayr and Kilmarnock, which governed the two nearest population centres. Local authority involvement also implied financial support for the park, and Ayr Burgh Council was concerned about the open-ended nature of the financial commitment initially proposed.²⁶ Moreover, several Kilmarnock Burgh councillors quite reasonably questioned the value of a park as far away as Culzean (around 27 miles distant) as a resource for their ratepayers.²⁷ Both burghs, nevertheless, gave the project their blessing, and the three bodies came to an understanding about the extent of their annual contribution, which was to be substantial, and which would represent the 25% of eligible costs not provided for under the legislation.²⁸ Stormonth Darling was justifiably proud of the achievement (largely brokered by himself personally) of partnership between the Burghs and the County

²⁵ Edinburgh, Scottish Development Department archives: DD12/3460: Draft Terms of Reference for Gillespie, 16 December 1968: NTS Press Release 20 January 1969.

²⁶ Edinburgh, National Trust for Scotland archives: 01/0041/27/02: Letter, D. Richmond (Town Clerk, Ayr Burgh), to Stormonth Darling, 13 March 1969.

²⁷ *Kilmarnock Star*, 21 March 1969. Other members were more enthusiastic about having a country park provided for their ratepayers at comparatively low cost (letter to editor, *Kilmarnock Star* from Police Judge Thomas Ryan, 2 May 1969.)

²⁸ Edinburgh, National Trust for Scotland Archives: Minute of Agreement, 4 March 1970, from Registers of Scotland 2781.

Council, not least because the three councils had a historically awkward relationship and were not known for working together in this way.

There was also a degree of tension over the formal agreement to manage Culzean Country Park. The main issue seems to have been the need to protect the Trust's statutory obligations under its own governing document from dilution, or compromise, by the involvement of others. An early distinction was made between the house and its immediate surrounds, which would remain exclusively under NTS management, and the wider country park, which would be managed by a committee including representatives of the three local authorities alongside NTS. The public, however, would not need to be aware of this arrangement, which was purely fiscal in nature; visitors would be presented with a seamless whole that included both the castle and the wider estate.²⁹ The eventual agreement required maintenance of 'the character and atmosphere of Culzean', (something on which the Trust and the local authorities were strongly agreed) and allowed NTS to exercise day-to-day management within a budget agreed by the signatories, with the local authorities making good any revenue deficit.³⁰

Stormonth Darling was quite clear that the underlying motive was to raise capital to provide better visitor facilities, thereby increasing income and reducing the revenue deficit. He justified the partnership with local authorities by identifying Culzean with its constituency and giving a degree of democratic legitimacy, as well as reinforcing links with educational and adventure projects run by the authorities. A letter, not written for

²⁹ Edinburgh, National Trust for Scotland archives: 01/0041/09/01: Report to NTS Executive Committee, November 1970, by Don Aldridge.

³⁰ Edinburgh, National Trust for Scotland Archives: Minute of Agreement, 4 March 1970, from Registers of Scotland 2781. Ayr Burgh initially sought to limit their liability for the deficit, but eventually conceded the point.

circulation, underscores the essential purpose of country park designation for Culzean as a calculated route to an essentially financial end, but it is interesting that he does not highlight the somewhat open-ended commitment by the local authorities, which was clearly advantageous to the Trust's ongoing financial challenges.³¹

Cementing the agreement delayed designation of the country park (though it nevertheless remained open to the public) but a formal opening eventually took place in March 1970.³² Shortly after this, the NTS entered into a long-running contractual agreement with Elisabeth Beazley, under which she visited the site no less than 80 times before her retirement in 1984, submitting around 60 reports on a very wide range of issues and concerns which seem to have been directed largely by her own enthusiasms.³³ By far the most important of these was the document in which she identified both the overwhelming need for a visitor centre and the possibilities offered in this respect by a sympathetic conversion of the Adam-designed Home Farm buildings.³⁴ This suggestion was taken up in 1972 and completed three years later, at a cost of over £250,000; it won five architectural awards.³⁵ But this was not the end of expenditure on Culzean; in total, between 1971 and 1996, a total capital investment of over £3 million was made in the country park, of which two-thirds came through the

³¹ Edinburgh, National Trust for Scotland archives: 01/0041/27/02: Letter, Stormonth Darling to John Winniffrith, Director, National Trust, 25 March 1969. The letter also suggests that its author was vaguely uncomfortable about contracting with 'Socialist' authorities.

³² *Kilmarnock Standard*, 26 December 1969.

³³ Edinburgh, National Trust for Scotland archives: 01/0041/48/01 includes most of these reports, but others are scattered throughout the archive. Elisabeth Beazley (1923- unknown date of death) was a landscape architect with interests in Wales and Iran as well as in the practicalities of countryside recreation and visitor management.

³⁴ Edinburgh, National Trust for Scotland Archives: 01/0041/27/02: Elisabeth Beazley's Initial Report, May 1970.

³⁵ Waugh, *Shell Book of Country Parks*, p. 211.

Countryside Commission for Scotland's country parks programme.³⁶ This made Culzean by some distance the most expensive country park after Strathclyde.



Figure 6.2: Culzean Country Park: Home Farm Visitor Centre (Author's collection)

Much of the early investment in Culzean was spent on infrastructure. In the first two years of operation, most of the grant aid went towards new car parking, access roads, and footpaths, although investment was also made to create or refurbish picnic sites and to provide new outdoor facilities such as a play area for children. Stormonth Darling claimed that 'at Culzean, the visitor...can find peace and quietude...intellectual exercise...or outdoor pursuits'.³⁷ The 1973 guide to the country park noted the existence of several walks and trails, as well as refurbished estate buildings and picnic areas by the ponds.³⁸ But there was clearly still work to be done to fully achieve

³⁶ Campbell, 'The Wood, Not the Trees', Appendix B. Campbell's work required him to standardise costs, and all his figures, including this one, are 1996 equivalent values.

³⁷ Edinburgh: National Library of Scotland: Saltire Society Archive ACC13161/115: Conference Report: *Glaswegians and their Countryside*, Glasgow, 1970.

³⁸ D. Bremner, *Culzean Country Park* (Edinburgh: National Trust for Scotland, 1973), p. 6

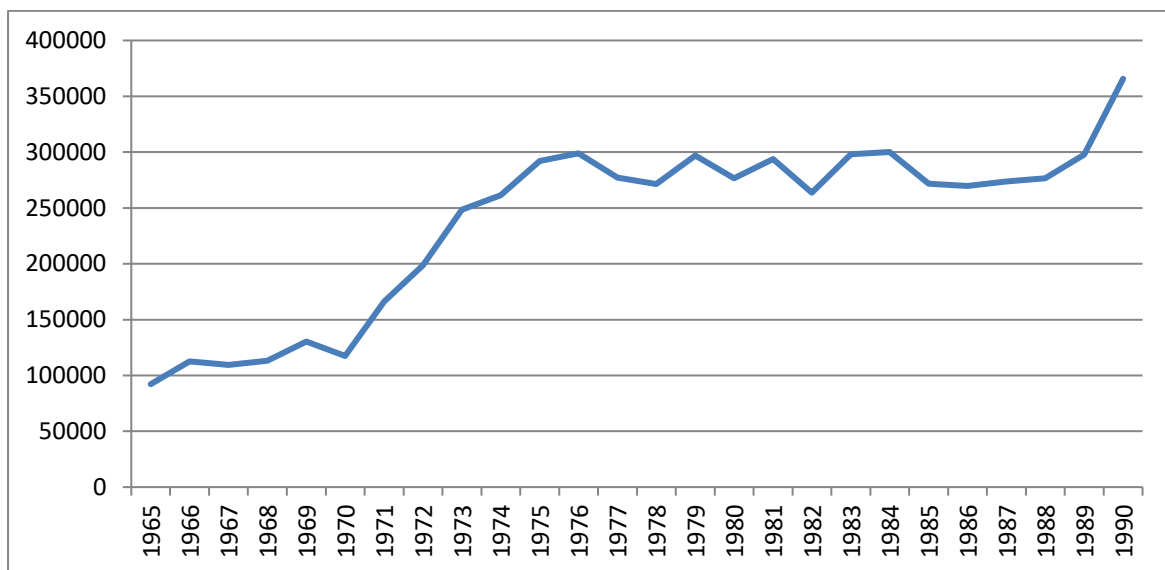
Beazley's initial goal of 'something more than a day in the country', and Beazley herself highlighted several further improvements, many of them minor but others of greater consequence, that should be made.³⁹

Any assessment of the effectiveness of this investment is dependent on agreeing criteria by which effectiveness can be measured. In one sense, the continued existence of Culzean, following its financial peril in the 1960s, is evidence in itself of the effectiveness of this and other investment in the property; but since Stormonth Darling's original argument focussed on using capital investment to generate increased visitor revenue, it is appropriate to look at visitor numbers at the site. Attendance figures are notoriously unreliable at many outdoor sites, and are often generously estimated; NTS' policy of charging for admission and parking, and the remoteness of Culzean from non-paying pedestrian visitors, mean that Culzean visitor numbers are more dependable than most. Moreover, they were accumulated and reported using a consistent methodology, at least from 1970 onwards.⁴⁰ The development of visitor numbers is shown in this chart:

³⁹ Edinburgh, National Trust for Scotland Archives: 01/0041/48/01: E. Beazley, article for NTS Yearbook 1976.

⁴⁰ Figures from before 1970 do not distinguish between visitors to the castle and those visiting the areas which later became the country park; after 1970, the data are reported separately in NTS Annual Reports.

Fig. 6.3: Visitors to Culzean Country Park 1965 -1990 (Castle before 1970)

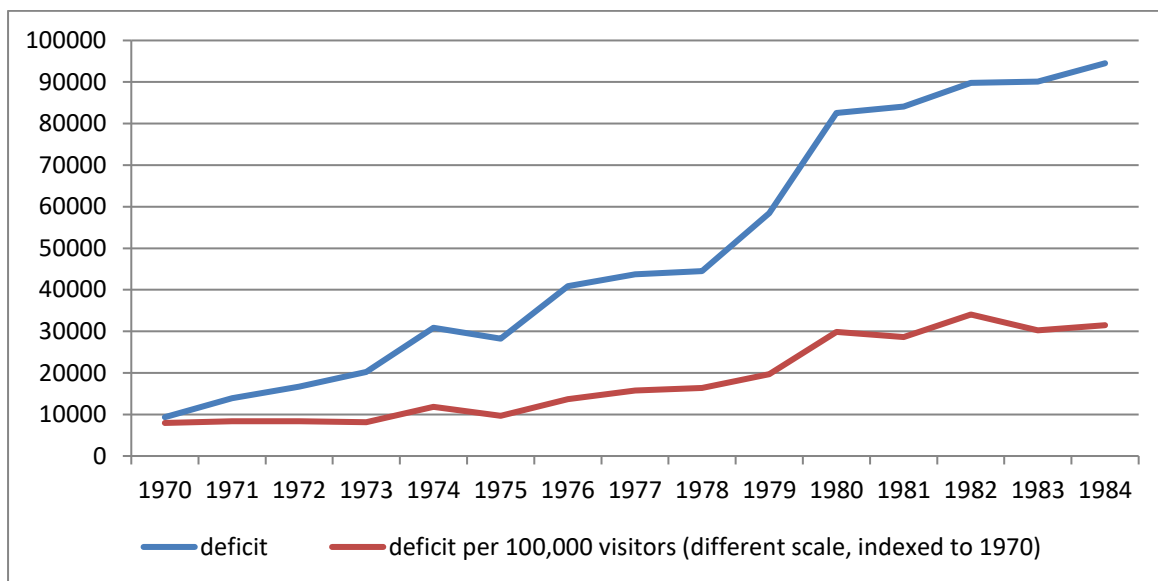


Source: National Trust for Scotland Yearbooks, 1965 - 1990.

In the mid-sixties, Culzean attracted an audience of around 100,000 visitors a year, a figure that was increasing very slowly. In 1970, the first year of designation as a country park, visitor numbers rose sharply, and they got a further boost when the visitor centre was opened, rising to around 300,000 through the late seventies and eighties. The numbers show incremental increase rather than an immediate surge, suggesting that designation, associated publicity, and the resulting greater attention to the country park and its opportunities, contributed significantly to the change.

The essential purpose of designation was financial security, however, and it is therefore also appropriate to explore whether the capital investment, and the increased visitor numbers, achieved Stormonth Darling's objective of covering the revenue costs of the park. This information is available for the period 1970 - 1984, and is analysed here:

Fig 6.4: Revenue deficit at Culzean Country Park, 1970 - 1984



Source: Edinburgh, NTS Archives: 01/0041/32/03: Culzean Country Park expenditure profile, 1970 - 1984

The deficit (which represents only those costs allocated to the country park, and excludes the upkeep of the castle itself) rose steadily over the period, in spite of – or perhaps partly because of – the rise in visitor numbers. A deficit of less than £10,000 in 1970 had increased nearly ten-fold by 1984, accelerating rapidly in the later seventies, and the growth of that deficit was almost unchecked across the entire period. In terms of visitor numbers, the increase was less marked, however; it represented a ratepayer subsidy of £0.08 per visitor in 1970, which remained steady until 1973 and then rose slowly to £0.32 per visitor in 1984.⁴¹ Inflation, a serious problem in the mid-seventies, accounts for around £45,000 of the cash increase, but the effective subsidy per visitor from the local authorities actually reduced in real terms over the period; an

⁴¹ Edinburgh, National Trust for Scotland Archives: 01/0041/32/03: Culzean Country Park expenditure profile, 1970 - 1984.

inflation-linked subsidy would have been closer to £0.40 per visitor.⁴² Designation thus did not change the fact that each visitor represented a cost, rather than a benefit, to the enterprise; but while designation (and its associated investment and publicity) may have helped to keep the deficit in check, the key to the success of Culzean Country Park was the open-ended agreement with the local authorities which ensured that any revenue deficit would be covered.

The average annual contribution made by the three authorities and their successors was over £65,000 per annum, a substantial sum in a local authority budget at this time, even when split between the partners.⁴³ And yet this commitment does not seem to have been a significant issue for the local authorities, not even for the one carrying most of the burden: the Chief Executive of Kyle and Carrick District Council, which took on half the financial responsibility from 1975 onwards, was still able in 1984 to describe Culzean as 'one of the bargains of the century'.⁴⁴ It must also be borne in mind that, for every £1 contributed by ratepayers to capital and revenue costs, the park received more than £2 through CCS.⁴⁵

Culzean is an interesting choice as a first country park for Scotland. It met many of the criteria, being essentially rural in character, large enough to accommodate visitors in significant numbers, and sufficiently attractive in its own right to draw an audience. But it could hardly be described as being close to a major centre of population: Ayr,

⁴² S. Morley, "Historical UK Inflation and Price Conversion" <<http://safalra.com/other/historical-uk-inflation-price-conversion/>> [accessed 17 February 2015].

⁴³ The original three authorities were superseded in 1975 by successor authorities under Local Government Reorganisation, and the allocations of financial contribution were changed, but the principle of partnership remained.

⁴⁴ Edinburgh, National Trust for Scotland archives: 01/0041/32/02: Talk by Ian Gillies, Chief Executive of Kyle and Carrick District Council at NTS country park conference, Ayr, April 1984. Kyle and Carrick DC superseded the Burgh of Ayr and a large area of rural Ayrshire after local government re-organisation.

⁴⁵ Edinburgh: National Trust for Scotland archives: 01/0041/32/03: Culzean Country Park expenditure profile 1970-1984.

the nearest settlement of any consequence, was 15 miles away with a population of around 50,000, Kilmarnock a similar size but 27 miles distant, while the Clydeside conurbation, for whose residents country parks were more directly intended, was over 50 miles away, well beyond the 25-mile distance generally accepted as being the standard range for a day trip to the countryside.⁴⁶ Moreover, Culzean was already open to the public, so it could scarcely be seen as new provision to meet a growing demand for outdoor recreation; and although it came to be provided with some of the facilities that became the norm for country parks, it never offered anything more active than a country walk, and set itself out to be a centre for countryside conservation and appreciation – an objective that, however meritorious, was not central to the legislators. Stormonth Darling acknowledged as much in 1969 when he claimed to be 'establishing a prototype of a country park, and one of a very different nature to that conceived by those who thought up part IV of the Countryside (Scotland) Act.'⁴⁷

This country park was thus to be both an example for its successors, and a radical departure from the norm, an unusual combination of expectations; it was said to be 'blazing a trail for others to follow'.⁴⁸ CCS considered it 'a model for all Britain' in spite of its many inconsistencies with the stated purpose of the legislation.⁴⁹ Stormonth Darling was especially proud of the shared responsibility, which he described as 'the most spectacular example to date' of partnership working; it was a very early example of a type of cross-sectoral, and cross-boundary, partnership which would become

⁴⁶University of Sheffield, "Data: Deaths and Population," 1971 <www.sasi.group.shef.ac.uk> [accessed 11 February 2015].

⁴⁷ Edinburgh, National Trust for Scotland Archives: 01/0041/27/02: letter from J Stormonth Darling to Stewart Mackintosh, Glasgow City Council, 6 June 1969.

⁴⁸ Edinburgh, National Trust for Scotland Archives: 01/0041/27/02: notes on visit by William Ross, Secretary of State for Scotland, 19 December 1969.

⁴⁹ Jean Balfour, Chair of CCS, quoted in Stormonth Darling, *Culzean: The Continuing Challenge*, p. 30.

more commonplace in the later twentieth century, and may be considered groundbreaking in that respect.⁵⁰ Stormonth Darling believed that he had taken a risk with this approach, which proved difficult to integrate with the Trust's statutory inalienable rights over its property and which depended on the local authorities' agreement with the Trust that the character of the site should not be changed, their ongoing preparedness to write a blank cheque, and their willingness to accept a junior, and fairly passive, role in management.

However, the model created in the Culzean partnership was only followed at one other Scottish site, the NTS property at Brodick Castle on the Isle of Arran, which became a country park in 1982 with a similar agreement between the Trust and Cunninghame District Council.⁵¹ A third NTS property, Haddo in Aberdeenshire, was never placed in such an arrangement, with the two entities of the country house and the country park managed completely separately by NTS and Grampian Regional Council respectively. South of the border, there are several examples of joint National Trust/local authority management in the north-west of England, such as at Daisy Nook (Manchester) and Styal (Cheshire) which may have been influenced in their approach by the success of Culzean, but also many other Trust properties where no comparable partnership was established.⁵² Culzean provided inspiration in other ways, too; the remodelling of Home Farm was utilised as an example of what might be done at Chatelherault, where in 1974 a problematic building needed a creative solution.⁵³

⁵⁰ Stormonth Darling, *Culzean: The Continuing Challenge*, p. 16.

⁵¹ Edinburgh: NTS Archives 01/0020/04/04: Minute of Agreement for Brodick Castle Country Park, April 1980. This agreement limits the contribution to be raised from the Council in a way that the Culzean document does not.

⁵² Waugh, *Shell Book of Country Parks*, pp. 83, 88.

⁵³ Edinburgh: Saltire Society archive: Acc 9393/394: NTS response to planning application for Chatelherault demolition, 21 May 1974; CCS response, 28 May 1974; SDD response, 29 July 1974.

Culzean is a prime example of the importance of networking. Again, Stormonth Darling admitted this when he later acknowledged those whose influence had helped to secure the project, including local and national politicians and civil servants, as well as other Scots of influence, all courted by either himself or his Chairman, the Marquis of Bute.⁵⁴ But while it is true that many others were involved in bringing the project to fruition, this does not diminish the pivotal role of Stormonth Darling himself, whose vision and determination ensured that the opportunity created in the countryside legislation was seized and used to the fullest possible extent.

Culzean also highlights the way policy on Scottish country parks changed. It was registered and designated before the visitor centre and much of the other infrastructure were created; CCS would later insist on withholding designation until basic visitor facilities were completed, to avoid public disappointment. It also had no agreed management plan, whereas CCS would later need to approve such a document. It was conceived and created before any clarity had been reached on what a country park should be, or offer, and undoubtedly benefitted from this vagueness, which effectively allowed CCS and the SDD to admit whatever they felt appropriate, even if, as in the Home Farm conversion, the costs were ‘staggering’.⁵⁵ Later country park projects faced more rigorous criteria and tougher financial negotiation; but at this time, CCS claimed that the level of need made it easy to approve applications.⁵⁶

⁵⁴ Stormonth Darling, *Culzean: The Continuing Challenge*, p. 17.

⁵⁵ Edinburgh, National Trust for Scotland archives 01/0041/28/01: Letter from Tom Huxley (CCS) to Stormonth Darling, 20 January 1971, reporting on a meeting with Katharine Gillender of SDD.

⁵⁶ Edinburgh: National Library of Scotland, Saltire Society archive: Acc 13161/115: Talk by John Foster, Director of CCS, at Society’s ‘Glaswegians and their Countryside’ conference, May 1970. Foster is being more than a little disingenuous; by this time CCS had received a large number of expressions of interest, many of which proved easy to turn down.

What is absolutely clear, though, is how fortuitous and convenient this arrangement was. For the Trust, it promised to achieve the vitally important objective of rescuing Culzean's perilous financial position, and saving the property for the nation. Country park status allowed a redistribution of expenditure that allowed for essential capital works and further development of facilities as well as ongoing maintenance. For the local authorities, it addressed any obligation placed on them by legislation to provide country parks, and did so in a spectacular fashion at a much lower cost than would have been involved in developing more local provision. For CCS, it allowed the reasonably quick delivery of a country park, one of the organisation's primary challenges. And for the SDD, who disbursed the funding, and the politicians who allocated it, it showed a willingness to grasp the opportunity offered by the countryside legislation and secure significant, and highly visible, resource for Scotland. Little wonder, then, that every opportunity was taken to show the project off, even to the extent of a royal visit, and the featuring of the castle on Scottish banknotes.⁵⁷ Culzean was, and remains, one of the most popular visitor attractions in Scotland, contributing significantly to tourism, employment and the wider local economy; arguably, this might not have been possible without the country park project, and the flexibility that evidently came with being the first scheme to be considered.

⁵⁷ The (former) Royal Bank of Scotland £5 note.

Chatelherault (1987)

'Chatelherault...what a sad, sad story it is.'

*P. Ogle-Skan, Ministry of Public Buildings and Works, 1970*⁵⁸

Chatelherault Country Park lies south of Hamilton, on the edge of a heavily industrialised area of Lanarkshire. It occupies part of the Hamilton High Parks, land once in the ownership of the Dukes of Hamilton; their estate also included the Low Parks, much of which is now Strathclyde Country Park. The centrepiece of the country park is the former hunting lodge of Chatelherault itself, named after the Dukes' holdings in Châtelleraut [*sic*] in Poitou-Charentes; the lodge was designed by William Adam and built in the 1730s as part of a planned landscape around the impressive Hamilton Palace. One of its purposes was to house the Duke's hunting dogs, and Adam referred to the building, with a hint of irony, as the Duke's 'dog kennell',⁵⁹ although it also provided space for hunting parties and related activities.⁶⁰ The lodge is a category 'A' listed building, built on high ground looking towards the former palace, and visible across a wide area.⁶¹ It has received several accolades from visiting writers and commentators, and was described at the time of its construction as 'the finest piece of garden architecture in Britain', and as 'a breathtaking reminder of the glories that have vanished from this estate.'⁶²

⁵⁸ Edinburgh: National Records of Scotland: SDD Ancient Monuments Branch archive DD27/4168. Letter, P. Ogle-Skan (Ministry of Public Buildings and Works) to Marquess of Bute, 1st October 1970.

⁵⁹ William Adam, *Vitruvius Scoticus* (Edinburgh, A Black, 1812; reprinted Edinburgh, Paul Harris, 1980), p. 160.

⁶⁰ Clare Henry, 'Facelift for the Duke's Dog Kennels', *Glasgow Herald*, 10 January 1987

⁶¹ The Scottish listing system approximates to the system used in England and Wales: category 'A' signifies a structure of national or international importance, category 'B' one of regional significance.

⁶² Clive Aslet, 'Chatelherault, near Glasgow', *Country Life*, 13 August 1987, pp. 86–89 (p. 86).



Figure 6.5: The 'Dogg Kennell', Chatelherault (Author's collection)

The country park also incorporates several other features of heritage and environmental interest, including the remains of the twelfth-century Cadzow Castle, and the Duke's Bridge, connecting the High Parks to the scenically beautiful Avon Gorge. The parkland includes the fifteenth-century Cadzow Oaks, and the unique wild white Cadzow cattle. It is a useful case study for the origins of country parks in Scotland, because it is a late site, almost the last to be designated by the Countryside Commission for Scotland (CCS), and contrasts with other case studies to illustrate the evolution of policy over the country park era, highlighting issues that were more readily addressed or absorbed in earlier years.

The land underneath the Hamilton estate is rich in mineral deposits. Mining took place in the Avon Gorge from the 1820s onwards, with deep mining for coal beginning in 1882, and sand quarrying ten years later. Exclusion zones established to prevent undermining of the buildings proved ineffective to the extent that by 1918 the

magnificent Hamilton Palace was no longer habitable; it was demolished in 1927, an act described by a later Duke as 'the architectural crime of the century for Scotland'.⁶³ Chatelherault too was damaged by mining, which caused slippage – still apparent – in the building; a fire in 1944 also caused extensive damage, and was exacerbated by subsequent vandalism and neglect. Meanwhile, sand extraction came ever nearer the building, adding to the threat of subsidence, until in 1964 a planning application was submitted by the estate company to further extend the sand workings; although the application did not say so, its approval would have meant the demolition of Chatelherault.⁶⁴ This application opened a new chapter in the history of the property, bringing both its condition, and the threat to its survival, to a wider audience.

The planning application was rejected by Lanark County Council, but went to a Public Inquiry in 1966; although other factors, including the quality of the landscape, were raised, the decision clearly turned on the future of the building of Chatelherault. The estate's evidence included an architect's report indicating extensive dry rot and vandalism which had worsened to the point where the property, open to the public since 1947, had to be closed on safety grounds. Repairs, this claimed, would cost at least £39,000 to make the building watertight, or up to £180,000 to restore the building to its original condition, but the estate was unwilling to entertain such expenditure.⁶⁵ They were also concerned at the loss of the sand under Chatelherault, valued at £65,000.⁶⁶ The Secretary of State however accepted the Council's argument, supported by several other bodies, that Chatelherault was of outstanding architectural

⁶³ Anne Campbell Dixon, 'A £7million Dog Kennel', *Evening Times* 26th September 1987; the Duke is said to have added that he was, nevertheless, glad that he didn't have to live there.

⁶⁴ Edinburgh: National Library of Scotland: Saltire Society Archive, Acc 9393/394: Report on findings of Public Inquiry, 20 April 1966, p. 2.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 6, 14

⁶⁶ *ibid.*, p. 11

importance, and that saving it was 'not yet beyond hope'. On this basis the estate's appeal was rejected, and opportunity was opened for someone to come forward with a viable rescue plan.⁶⁷

Reviewing the estate's evidence and actions, it is apparent that, whatever they may have claimed, they were intent on demolition and mineral exploitation. While maintaining that they were amenable to the possibility of saving Chatelherault, they also made clear that they would expect to be compensated financially for such a decision.⁶⁸ Their architect's report contrasted sharply with notes made by planning officials, assisted by external experts (including the eminent architect Ian Lindsay), when they visited in 1964; these reported subsidence, dry rot, and vandalism, but also that some of the rooms were still in good order and even that some of the original plasterwork remained intact.⁶⁹ The estate made great play of the problem of vandalism, writing several letters over the years complaining about its escalation, but did little to prevent it; the closure of the grounds in 1962 looks more like an attempt to reduce potential public liability risks than a measure to protect the building from further damage.⁷⁰ It was pointed out later that the estate had spent just £3,770 on Chatelherault in twenty years since 1945, so that the claim that the building was a

⁶⁷ Edinburgh: National Records of Scotland: Royal Fine Art Commission for Scotland Archive RF4/33: letter from M. E. Hay, Scottish Development Dept., to Baillie and Gifford, Solicitors for the Estate, 26 July 1966.

⁶⁸ Edinburgh: National Records of Scotland: SDD Ancient Monuments Branch Archive DD27/4168: Note of visit to Chatelherault, 7th September 1964.

⁶⁹ Edinburgh: National Records of Scotland: SDD Ancient Monuments Branch Archive DD27/4168: Note of visit to Chatelherault, 7th September 1964. The visiting team included Ian Lindsay, a member of the Historic Buildings Council which advised the Scottish Development Department on these matters. Lindsay (1906 – 1966) was an architect whose work focussed primarily on restoration. He worked on several high-profile projects including Iona Abbey, Canongate Kirk (Edinburgh) and the town of Inveraray in Argyll.

⁷⁰ Edinburgh: National Records of Scotland: SDD Ancient Monuments Branch archive DD27/4241: letters from Factors of Hamilton and Kinneil Estates, 12 July 1963; 26 Feb 1965; 20 Jan 1975.

drain on estate resources appears without foundation; there were also suspicions, unsupported by definite evidence, of deliberate neglect.⁷¹

One of the organisations taking an interest was the Royal Fine Arts Commission of Scotland (RFACS), a statutory consultee whose views were sought as a matter of course on any planning application involving a listed building. A briefing note for their Chairman, Sir Charles Connell, noted the reluctance of the Historic Buildings Council (HBC, the section of the SDD responsible for listed buildings) to fund restoration of Chatelherault, on somewhat specious grounds, including the relative remoteness of the site from any local population. HBC was keen to reclassify Chatelherault as an ancient monument, a move which would conveniently transfer any liability for preservation to the separate budget of the Ancient Monuments Board (AMB).⁷² The RFACS described HBC's attitude as 'curiously lukewarm', and backed the alternative view, shared by Lindsay, that the building should be saved; Lindsay had already lobbied the AMB to intervene following the 1964 investigation.⁷³ The AMB's view was generally pessimistic: 'Chatelherault...seems a pretty hopeless case, as no-one has come forward with any sort of a scheme for preserving it'.⁷⁴ They concluded that the building should not be preserved, due largely to the cost involved but also because of the building's French character, a response which prompted Lindsay's immediate

⁷¹ R. Harris, 'The Chatelherault Story', *Hamilton Advertiser* 24 July 1987.

⁷² Edinburgh: National Records of Scotland: SDD Ancient Monuments Branch archive DD 27/4168: Minutes of HBC meeting 30 October 1964.

⁷³ Edinburgh: National Records of Scotland: Royal Fine Art Commission for Scotland Archive, RF4/33: Chatelherault: Note for Sir Charles Connell, 5 May 1965. Connell (1932-2015) was a leading Scottish industrialist who led one of the largest shipyards on the Clyde, which after its collapse in 1968 became part of Upper Clyde Shipbuilders. He later focussed on managing his family estates for farming and field sports, and was involved in a controversial wind farm project that led him to be nicknamed 'Baron Breeze'. (Obituary, *Scotsman*, 21 December 2015)

⁷⁴ Edinburgh: National Records of Scotland: SDD Ancient Monuments Branch archive DD27/4168: Memo, G. Crane to Miss Harvie-Anderson, dated 15 March 1966 (but this must be an error, the context suggests the date is probably 1964).

resignation and a letter of protest from Connell to the Secretary of State.⁷⁵ Yet not everyone shared this pessimism, and Stewart Cruden, an HBC Inspector, was among those who saw the potential of the property as part of a new landscape being planned around the M74 motorway, from which it would be visible, and thought it could be 'once again the arresting eye-catcher it was intended to be.'⁷⁶

The exchanges and discussions of this period following the Public Inquiry reveal a high degree of bureaucratic uncertainty and indecision, and a good deal of anxiety, but very little direction or leadership. Possible solutions were raised, but failed to convince; influential individuals and organisations expressed their concern, but funding was always a major obstacle. Even within the Scottish Office, there were significant differences of opinion between departments, and between decision-makers within departments, allowing the problem to be kicked around without any real hope of resolution. Meanwhile, deterioration continued; the estate reported in 1968 that 'Chatelherault is now a complete wreck' and, perhaps seeing opportunity in the ongoing indecision, indicated its intention to submit a fresh planning application, which duly arrived late in 1969.⁷⁷

The passage of the Countryside (Scotland) Act in 1967, which promoted the idea of country parks as sites for large-scale outdoor recreation, opened up a new option for Chatelherault, which already had some history as a public open space, having been used informally in this way up to 1962. The AMB floated this idea in 1971, hoping for

⁷⁵ Edinburgh: National Records of Scotland: SDD Ancient Monuments Branch archive DD27/4168: Memo from G Crane (AMB) to S Cruden, SDD 16 February 1965; handwritten note S. Cruden to Mr Taylor, 15th August 1968; minutes of AMB 29 Jan 1965.

⁷⁶ Edinburgh: National Records of Scotland: SDD Ancient Monuments Branch archive DD27/4168: Note from Cruden to Mr Taylor, Commissioner of Ancient Monuments, 15 August 1968.

⁷⁷ Edinburgh: National Records of Scotland: Royal Fine Arts Commission for Scotland archive RF4/33: letter from Baillie and Gifford to County Planning Officer, 24 June 1969.

local authority and CCS support, but it seems to have been unaware that the idea had already been rejected by the estate late in 1970.⁷⁸ The idea was resurrected, though, by Jamie Stormonth Darling at the NTS, who suggested a country park funded by a combination of land rehabilitation funding and countryside grant, following the model employed at Lochore Meadows.⁷⁹ This was by far the most developed proposal to date, even though Stormonth Darling recognised that it would be difficult to secure expenditure from funds already exhaustively used for the massively expensive Strathclyde Country Park, serving a largely similar catchment population. The SDD's response, however, was unenthusiastic; they recognised that the owners' main interest lay in commercial exploitation, and not in creating a recreation area, but they made no move to challenge this.⁸⁰ The NTS Chairman, Lord Bute, was resolute: 'I am not going to be beaten by Chatelherault...it is far too important.'⁸¹ He worked his contacts, including the Duke of Hamilton himself, and this led directly to the offer of a small part of the High Parks to the state.⁸² The proposal envisaged the creation of a recreational area with Chatelherault, stabilised in its current condition as an ancient monument, as its centrepiece, alongside continuing agricultural and timber exploitation of much of the estate.⁸³

⁷⁸ Edinburgh: National Records of Scotland: SDD Ancient Monuments Branch archive DD27/4168: File note on meeting between AMB and estate, 22 Feb 1972.

⁷⁹ Edinburgh: National Records of Scotland: SDD Ancient Monuments Branch archive DD27/4168: Letter from J Stormonth Darling to Marquess of Bute, 24 April 1972.

⁸⁰ Edinburgh: National Records of Scotland: SDD Ancient Monuments Branch archive DD27/4168: Letter R. D. Cramond, SDD to J Stormonth Darling, 3 May 1972.

⁸¹ Edinburgh: National Trust for Scotland archive P.1.15: Letter Lord Bute to J Stormonth Darling, 16 March 1972

⁸² Edinburgh: National Records of Scotland: SDD Ancient Monuments Branch archive DD27/4168: Letter, Bute to P. Ogle-Skan, Director of Scottish Services, Min. of Building and Public Works, 28 September 1970, and response 1 October 1970; letter Duke of Hamilton to George Younger, Secretary of State, 6 July 1972; Edinburgh: Saltire Society archive DD27/4168: memo from J Bannatyne, RFACS to Lanark County Council, 14 March 1974.

⁸³ Edinburgh: National Records of Scotland: SDD Ancient Monuments Branch archive DD27/4168: internal SDD memo from A Thomson to R. Cramond, June 1972 (precise date unclear)

This promising opening was halted by the death of the Duke in 1973, and the subsequent discovery by the remaining estate trustees of this offer, which had been made without their sanction, and which they immediately repudiated as not in the estate's best interests.⁸⁴ A further planning application in 1974 attracted the same objections as before, but Lanark County Council took a more active role in rallying support for preservation, and called a meeting of the interested parties to explore options.⁸⁵ These included the proposal from Stormonth Darling for a country park, with land acquisition costs financed by the National Land Fund, while the Scottish Civic Trust supported acquisition in lieu of estate duty. Stormonth Darling also explored possible uses for a restored Chatelherault, an issue that had always been problematic and which had never been given full consideration.⁸⁶ CCS indicated an interest in grant-aiding site improvements, but was curiously silent on a possible country park.⁸⁷ The estate, meanwhile, pointed out that the passage of twelve years since their first application had not produced a single feasible solution other than demolition, and argued their case accordingly.⁸⁸

Local Government reorganisation in 1975 further complicated matters. Strathclyde Regional Council's early interest in the issue fell away because of uncertainty over its

⁸⁴ Edinburgh: National Library of Scotland: Saltire Society archive, Acc 9393/394: Letter from Baillie and Gifford to estate factors, 24 July 1973. The Trustees sought protection under provisions of the Countryside (Scotland) Act 1967 which excepted agricultural land from public access.

⁸⁵ Edinburgh: National Library of Scotland: Saltire Society archive, Acc 9393/394: Minutes of meeting on 12 September 1974

⁸⁶ Edinburgh: National Library of Scotland: Saltire Society archive, Acc 9393/394: Letter Stormonth Darling to Lanark CC, 21 May 1974. He cited the example of the Home Farm at Culzean, an ambitious but successful restoration project.

⁸⁷ Edinburgh: National Library of Scotland: Saltire Society archive, Acc 9393/394: Letter CCS to Lanark County Council, 28 May 1974.

⁸⁸ Edinburgh: National Records of Scotland: Royal Fine Arts Commission for Scotland Archive RF4/33: Statement by R George, Director of Planning, Hamilton District Council, to Planning Appeal, 31 March 1977.

financial liabilities in the event of a transfer of ownership.⁸⁹ The SDD, now apparently more committed to the possibility of conservation, turned to Hamilton District Council and secured its agreement in principle to accept ownership and ongoing responsibility for both Chatelherault and the parkland, with SDD meeting the restoration costs for the building, and the Council reinstating the grounds.

Negotiations between SDD and the estate had also progressed to the point where the latter was willing to consider a transfer of ownership in lieu of death duties. This hopeful development collapsed, however, when it was realised that the estate was worth far more than the duty involved; there was no provision for reimbursing the excess, and although there was also a Capital Gains Tax liability, the legislation did not provide for acceptance of land in settlement of this aspect – a situation which the new Duke described as ‘appalling cynicism’ on the part of the Government.⁹⁰ The estate also rejected the official valuation, and saw its interests best served in a sale of the land, parcelled up into three lots, on the open market.⁹¹ This duly went ahead, and two lots were sold for agriculture and silviculture respectively, but the Secretary of State succeeded in acquiring the land that now forms the country park, with finance from the National Land Fund which included a significant grant towards urgent repairs.⁹² In doing so, he acquired a building with subsidence problems, with its roof gone and some internal floors collapsed, with external and internal ornamentation damaged or destroyed, and considerable fire, weather and other damage

⁸⁹ Edinburgh: National Library of Scotland: Saltire Society archive, Acc 9393/394: Report from Bob George, Director of Planning, Hamilton District Council, 3 February 1977. Edinburgh: National Trust for Scotland archive C.52: Letter F McQuarrie to Strathclyde Regional Council, 21 June 1978.

⁹⁰ ‘Deadline nears if Government wants Duke’s land’, *Glasgow Herald*, 20 June 1978

⁹¹ Hamilton and Kinneil Estates, *Sale of High Parks Estate, Hamilton* (1978) p. 10.

⁹² East Kilbride, Hamilton District Council Archive, DH 2/4/87: Chatelherault Official Opening Press Pack, S2 p. 1

throughout.⁹³ The new owners also had to contend with a landscape badly damaged by mineral workings, a large (and possibly unstable) cliff on the northern edge of the lodge, and the reported use of the site for occasional orgies.⁹⁴

Restoration of Chatelherault, which was eventually funded entirely from the public purse, took eight years, which were not without their own controversies. Hamilton District Council had taken a considerable risk in agreeing to the transfer, and had 'taken on the management responsibility when perhaps it [could] least afford to do so.'⁹⁵ It recognised the importance of the site, and believed its natural beauty complemented the more active recreation-focussed provision of Strathclyde Country Park; but it had also accepted responsibility for restoring the landscape to an appropriate standard. To do this, it secured a commitment (and funding) from the Manpower Services Commission to provide a workforce to work on the grounds, gardens and footpaths, and obtained a limited commitment from CCS to fund a ranger and some car park and infrastructure costs. It also secured additional funding from the National Heritage Memorial Fund (NHMF) to allow it to add an additional parcel of land to the site.⁹⁶ However, while it could find capital sums to contribute towards site development, ongoing revenue costs were another matter entirely, and became an increasingly significant issue as the date of handover approached.

The first signs of trouble emerged in a management report prepared by the District Council early in 1987. Although the bulk of the report dealt with operational

⁹³ East Kilbride: Hamilton District Council Archive: DH 2/4/87: Press Pack for Official Opening, S3.1.

⁹⁴ *Hamilton Advertiser*, 24 July 1987.

⁹⁵ East Kilbride: Hamilton District Council Archive, DH 2/4/87, minutes of meeting of High Parks Advisory Group, 5 October 1979.

⁹⁶ East Kilbride: Hamilton District Council Archive DH 2/4/86: Application and supporting material for proposed acquisition of deer park, 30 June 1983. The NHMF was the successor body to the National Land Fund

management, the opening section set out clearly and unambiguously the challenge facing the Council's revenue budget, which projected costs of over £130,000 a year of which only £81,000 would be permitted under the Council's approved expenditure.⁹⁷ Exceeding this limit would give rise, under legislation introduced by the Thatcher administration to reduce council spending, to a financial penalty levied by SDD. The Council repeatedly, and animatedly, sought a 'disregard' arrangement, which would allow them to spend a permitted sum beyond their guideline amount. Under Treasury pressure, SDD consistently turned down this request, leaving the Council, as it saw things, resolving an SDD problem in accepting Chatelherault while being penalised for spending the money necessary to make the transaction work.⁹⁸ It therefore turned to active consideration of withdrawal from the handover, and adopted a two-pronged policy of quietly seeking to spend within the limit while noisily agitating for a permitted disregard. A continuing, and escalating, correspondence ensued between the Council and SDD, and later involving also the Treasury, the local MP, and the Secretary of State. It drew attention to the anomalous situation whereby borrowing approval had been given for the capital spend due to the special circumstances, but a revenue disregard was being refused because the circumstances were insufficiently exceptional.⁹⁹ The Council finally raised the stakes by threatening withdrawal, and cancellation of the royal opening planned for late 1987, an act which would embarrass all concerned, but which was intended to show how seriously the Council viewed the issue. The SDD's response remained obdurate – 'Hamilton...are obviously trying

⁹⁷ East Kilbride: Hamilton District Council Archive, DD2/4/86: Chatelherault Operational Management Plan, 1987-88, unpaginated.

⁹⁸ Edinburgh: National Records of Scotland: Historic Buildings Council Archive DD32/365: letters between HDC and SDD, and internal SDD memos; correspondence with George Robertson MP and minutes of meetings, January - July 1987.

⁹⁹ Edinburgh: National Records of Scotland: Historic Buildings Council Archive DD32/365: Letter J H Gray, Hamilton District Council to Scottish Office 7 April 1986.

to...extract every last ounce out of the situation'.¹⁰⁰ They eventually came to acknowledge the point internally, and would even have been willing to make the concession to avoid possible royal dismay.¹⁰¹ However, the Secretary of State called the Council's bluff, pointing out that Hamilton faced embarrassment not only to its royal guests but also to its population, who would be denied a park they had already contributed substantially towards.¹⁰² In the end, the Council gave way, but not before causing tremors in officialdom.¹⁰³



Figure 6.6: Parterre at Chatelherault (Author's collection)

¹⁰⁰ Edinburgh: National Records of Scotland: Historic Buildings Council Archive DD32/365. Internal memo, Gill Stewart SDD to colleagues, 24 September 1986.

¹⁰¹ Edinburgh: National Records of Scotland: Historic Buildings Council Archive DD32/365: Internal memo, G Stewart to colleagues, 7 January 1987

¹⁰² Edinburgh: National Records of Scotland: Historic Buildings Council Archive DD32/365: internal SDD memo from G Stewart to colleagues, 26 June 1987

¹⁰³ Edinburgh: National Records of Scotland: Historic Buildings Council Archive DD32/365: letter A Baird, HDC to G Stewart, SDD, 3 July 1987.

This exchange is characterised by a high degree of brinkmanship, with the Council, for its part, feeling it had a compelling case that it was willing to push hard, while at the same time being open to a more contained approach, spending within its guidelines. On the other hand, the initially dogmatic response of SDD failed to recognise the anomaly created by its own inflexibility, and the difficulty this extra cost, easily absorbed by the regional authority which was originally intended to take over, would create for a smaller district with tighter spending limits. Whilst accepting that the Council's argument was somewhat disingenuous, it is nevertheless hard not to feel some sympathy for their position, after they had stepped into the breach left by Strathclyde's withdrawal. In fairness to the SDD, though, they were caught between the credibility of Hamilton's position and the inflexibility of their paymasters at Westminster; Chatelherault had become an opportunity for the national government to demonstrate its determination to enforce spending limits on local authorities.

Nor was this the only battle Hamilton had with the SDD. A report by Arthur Young in late 1987 drew further attention to the revenue deficit the Council would face in managing the park after handover, and recommended commercial concessions within the park to generate revenue from lettings.¹⁰⁴ A recommendation which had already gained some traction was a lease for a garden centre, both as an additional attraction and to guarantee a revenue stream for the park; the ideal location for this was in the parcel of land acquired by the Council in 1985 with funding from NHMF. Dobbie's Garden Centres, then a much smaller enterprise than today, already had an agreement in principle with the Council, but the SDD were deeply unhappy with the

¹⁰⁴ Arthur Young, 'Chatelherault Country Park Strategic Development Plan' (Unpublished report, Edinburgh, 1987), p. 43.

idea that land acquired with public funds should be utilised for commerce, and not only raised difficulties on their own account but also drew the funders' attention to the proposal, to which they too objected.¹⁰⁵ The SDD were also opposed to the council's plan to let out space for camping and caravanning, even though these were quite unexceptional facilities to suggest for inclusion in a country park, and had actually been written into CCS policy documents in the 1970s.¹⁰⁶ The Council's frustration with the SDD is evident in internal memos, and gradually the SDD relaxed their position in the face of the argument – which they had initially raised themselves – that the park needed to be more financially sustainable, and that a garden centre was not incompatible with a park operation. Dobbie's duly opened at Chatelherault in 1989.¹⁰⁷ Formal opening, and official registration of Chatelherault as Scotland's 35th country park, took place in 1987. Chatelherault had been fully restored, internally as well as externally, and the grounds and gardens restored to something approaching their former glory; only the ruins of Cadzow Castle remained untouched, and were fenced off for safety reasons, pending a time when resources might permit work there.¹⁰⁸ The park offered walks, gardens, picnicking, and a playground, and made great play of its heritage properties, of which Chatelherault itself was the main attraction, and of the gorge's scenic beauty, wildlife and natural environment.¹⁰⁹ It thus focussed largely on passive recreation and day visitors, rather than on the more active sports-based

¹⁰⁵ East Kilbride, Hamilton District Council Archive DH 2/4/86: letter G Stewart to A. Baird HDC, 7 December 1987; letter Michael Wright, National Heritage Memorial Fund, to A. Baird HDC, 22 December 1987.

¹⁰⁶ East Kilbride: Hamilton District Council Archive DH 2/4/86: letter G Stewart SDD to A Baird, HDC, 7 December 1987. Caravan sites had been explicitly mentioned in the 1966 white paper 'Leisure in the Countryside' as an appropriate use of country park land and funding.

¹⁰⁷ L. Nicol: 'Leisure Staff Praised for Imaginative Plans to develop Chatelherault' *Hamilton Advertiser*, 1 April 1988. The garden centre has since closed, and the land is now vacant.

¹⁰⁸ This has never happened; limited stabilisation has taken place, but the ruin remains fenced off.

¹⁰⁹ Hamilton: Library archive leaflet: 'A Day in the Country: Chatelherault Country Park' (undated)

facilities and overnight accommodation offered at its counterpart across the M74. The Grounds Manager, Jim Brockie, described it as a ‘park...designed for passive recreation...we want to see lots of people enjoying the countryside.’¹¹⁰ The management plan, praised by CCS as ‘one of the most comprehensive efforts to review investment and commitments at any country park in Scotland,’ set out objectives focussed on the environment and heritage.¹¹¹ It committed the Council to resist any development that would threaten either of these key elements, whilst nevertheless permitting the pursuit of revenue income consistent with the broader objectives.¹¹² The plan was also cautious about visitor numbers and stepped back from the visitor potential suggested by Young, which had envisaged a major tourist attraction.¹¹³ It also made a point of mentioning ‘the considerable contractual and financial problems, not the least being the lack of SDD financial underwriting’ and praised councillors for their courage in taking the site on.¹¹⁴

In conclusion, the story of Chatelherault, as a late and somewhat reluctant country park, contrasts dramatically with the enthusiasm shown in earlier times at Culzean, Lochore Meadows and Aden, and indeed elsewhere, when the urge to produce results was much stronger. It is therefore helpful to consider what made Chatelherault different and why it was so difficult to resolve the situation the property found itself in. Stormonth Darling summarised the situation neatly in terms of ‘personalities, politics

¹¹⁰ J. Brockie, ‘Chatelherault: The Restoration and Interpretation of a Folly’, in J. M. Fladmark (ed.) *Heritage: Conservation, Interpretation and Enterprise* (Aberdeen: Donhead Publishing, 1993), pp. 239–40 (p. 240).

¹¹¹ East Kilbride, Hamilton District Council Archive: letter from Roger Carr, CCS to HDC, 17 February 1988.

¹¹² A Whitfield, ‘Chatelherault Country Park: A Five Year Development Strategy 1988 -1992’ (Unpublished report, Hamilton, 1987), p. 2

¹¹³ Arthur Young, *Chatelherault Country Park*, p. 41

¹¹⁴ Whitfield, *Five Year Development Strategy*, preface.

and pounds', and this analysis provides a useful basis for examining the Chatelherault story.¹¹⁵

Personalities clearly meant something different to Stormonth Darling than merely people doing their jobs, though there are plenty of examples of these; he surely meant individuals with the drive and passion to see something change, and perhaps also the capacity to influence others whose support would help the project forward. This characterised his approach at Culzean, and later at Brodick, and is also evident here. Stormonth Darling is one of very few individuals to emerge from this episode with any credit. The individual leadership and drive that characterised other country park projects – Tindall at John Muir Country Park, Taylor at Lochore Meadows, Fladmark and Hill at Aden – was almost entirely missing at Chatelherault.

Lanark County Council's senior planners took an early lead in resisting the estate's attempts to exploit Chatelherault's mineral wealth, but they were unable or unwilling to take a more proactive role in championing the cause. Other notable names, such as Lindsay and Connell, were similarly unable to achieve the progress they must have hoped for. Even CCS, who might have been expected to take a more active role in a major countryside project, remained curiously liminal. As the agency responsible for country parks, they might have been expected to take a lead, if not at the outset than at least once the decision to create a country park had been taken. CCS minutes reveal very little discussion of Chatelherault until designation approached, and

¹¹⁵ Edinburgh: National Records of Scotland: Scottish Development Department Archive: Ancient Monuments Branch archive DD27/4168: Letter from J Stormonth Darling to Marquess of Bute, 24 April 1972.

although its Chair Jean Balfour is (incorrectly) credited with the original idea as early as 1977, the project was not seriously discussed by CCS during this period.¹¹⁶

If anyone deserves credit for the country park solution, it is surely Stormonth Darling, who (while not the first to suggest a recreational solution) was the first to demonstrate – as early as 1972 – how such a solution might work, and, crucially, how it might be financed. Stormonth Darling's enthusiasm to save Chatelherault originated in 1965, when a series of letters and meetings sought to engage the interest of RFACS, the Georgian Society and the Civic Trust, among others; from 1972 to 1979 he continued to work his network of contacts, from the Marquis of Bute to the Under-Secretary of State. His Chairman also worked hard for Chatelherault, including lobbying the estate trustees in very forthright terms.¹¹⁷ They found plenty of support in principle, but little that would enable genuine progress to be made. Meanwhile, the NTS itself was too heavily committed financially elsewhere to consider taking on Chatelherault, and no other body was able or willing to do so.¹¹⁸ In these circumstances, Stormonth Darling was unable to take the kind of lead he had shown at Culzean and Brodick.

Cost proved an obstacle to the project from its very beginnings. Both the landowners and the SDD had balked at the original restoration cost of £180,000 suggested by the estate architect in 1964, an amount which would equate to £1.3 million in 1987 prices. The actual cost of restoring Chatelherault (at 1987 prices) came to £3 million, with a further £1.6 million for a new visitor centre, and £2.2 million on the footpaths, grounds

¹¹⁶ *The Story So Far: Chatelherault Country Park* (Hamilton: Hamilton District Council, 1986), p. 1.

¹¹⁷ Edinburgh: National Trust for Scotland Archive: Letter Earl of Wemyss to Duke of Northumberland (a trustee of the Hamilton and Kinneil Estates), 3 August 1976.

¹¹⁸ Edinburgh: National Trust for Scotland Archive: C. 52: letter J Stormonth Darling to Marquess of Bute, 24 April 1972; Stormonth Darling reluctantly asked the Marquess to authorise NTS expenditure of £1,000 in support of the project.

and gardens, a total cost approaching £7 million when costs of acquisition are included.¹¹⁹ The delay, ambivalence and obfuscation that attended this project ironically proved exceptionally costly to the public purse. The fear of over-commitment and liability dogged the project throughout, making it even more remarkable that Hamilton District Council, with its more limited resources and capacity, should take on financial liabilities for a site well in excess of anything justified by the size of its taxpayer base. The park was, and remains, of considerable value to Hamilton; but should surely have been a regional project.

CCS' contribution is also curious; they played only a limited role in financing the project, and at one point Stormonth Darling challenged CCS that its attitude to Chatelherault risked being seen as indifference.¹²⁰ He made a similar observation three years later, repeating his demand for CCS to become more engaged with the project.¹²¹ He had a point; analysis of capital grants made by CCS during its lifetime shows that it contributed just £36,000 to Chatelherault.¹²² Even after allowing for the fact that the building restoration costs lay outside CCS' remit, their financial contribution was astonishingly small, and represents only just over a quarter of the eligible costs. A note of a 1974 meeting indicates the background: 'Strathclyde Park is receiving priority, and this penalises other countryside projects.'¹²³ And later that year, CCS highlighted

¹¹⁹ R Harris, 'Death Duties the Spur for the Restoration of Chatelherault', *Hamilton Advertiser* 31 July 1987.

¹²⁰ Edinburgh: National Trust for Scotland archive C.52: letter from J Stormonth Darling to John Foster, CCS, July 1976

¹²¹ Edinburgh: National Trust for Scotland archive C.52: letter from J Stormonth Darling to John Foster, CCS, 26 January 1979.

¹²² Campbell, 'The Wood, Not the Trees', Appendix A, p. 88. All Campbell's figures are revised to 1996 levels and this figure has been adjusted back to a 1987 equivalent for purposes of comparability.

¹²³ Edinburgh: National Trust for Scotland Archive C.52: memo from M Scrimgeour, NTS to J Stormonth Darling, 24 May 1974.

the improbability of finance for any project close to Strathclyde Country Park, however worthy, thereby effectively dismissing Chatelherault as a potential beneficiary.¹²⁴

The third ingredient identified by Stormonth Darling was politics, something which generally worked in favour of the country park projects elsewhere. Culzean saw local authorities co-operating to an unprecedented degree, and the SDD willing to interpret its rules in as favourable a way as possible to enable the project to be secured. Lochore Meadows similarly managed to secure substantial funding on the back of a feasibility study that can best be described as imaginative, whilst Aden was enthusiastically bankrolled by its local authority and supported by CCS with very limited critical analysis of its potential as a visitor attraction or of the viability of its expensive heritage offer. Chatelherault, in contrast, found itself obstructed at almost every turn.

The Secretary of State's first decision, upholding the County Council's decision against the estate's planning application, recognised the importance of Chatelherault, and allowed time and space for other bodies to come to its rescue, but left this entirely to others, who proved either unable or unwilling to back the project against the estate's own expectations. Local government reorganisation in 1975 could have had a positive effect, through the creation of a regional authority covering a large enough area, and sufficiently well-resourced, to allow adoption of the Chatelherault project as of regional benefit. It is curious that Strathclyde Regional Council's initial interest was never consummated, and the project would have failed at that point had Hamilton District Council not been willing to step in. But the attitude of Government bodies, even after

¹²⁴ Edinburgh: National Trust for Scotland Archive C.52: memo from M Scrimgeour, NTS to J Stormonth Darling, 16 September 1974.

the restoration of Chatelherault had been agreed, remained strangely obdurate. The inflexibility of a tax regime that would only allow the use of the estate to defray one tax liability but not another was an obstruction that nobody in government seems to have wanted to confront. The inflexibility of the authorities, from the SDD through to the Treasury, when faced with Hamilton's apparently reasonable request for a revenue disregard, was another. It becomes stranger still, since the disregard was entirely discretionary and set no unfortunate precedent, at a time when a successful outcome was surely politically essential not only for the Council but also for the national government, in a seat that was an SNP beachhead.¹²⁵ It did however illustrate to other Scottish local authorities the government's determination to rein back council spending, regardless of the merits of the case. And even after this issue was disposed of, Hamilton faced a further battle with the SDD over their alternative plans to raise revenue through a commercial let to Dobbie's, and the provision of caravan and camping space, both of which were entirely within the spirit of country park legislation.¹²⁶ In fact, though, most of the original arguments used in justification for country parks had evaporated by this time. Chatelherault was not designated a country park because of a need for rural recreational space in the Hamilton area; the space was there already, and demand was fully addressed by the enormous Strathclyde Country Park east of the town. There was no recreation deficit to be met here.

¹²⁵ Winnie Ewing famously took the seat for the nationalists in 1967, holding it till 1970.

¹²⁶ East Kilbride: Hamilton District Council Archive DH 2/4/86: letter G Stewart SDD to A Baird, HDC, 7 December 1987

The 'sad, sad story' of Chatelherault' has something of a happy ending, in that the lodge did not face the same fate as the Palace it was built to complement.¹²⁷ Indeed, the restoration was featured in a number of architectural journals, and won several awards, while Jim Brockie was awarded an MBE for his work restoring the grounds.¹²⁸ Functionally within the country park setting, the Chatelherault building is secondary to the modern visitor centre; but visually, on its setting between the parkland and the natural beauty of the gorge, it remains a outstandingly striking landscape feature.

Conclusion

The contrast between these two case studies could not be greater. At Culzean, the considerable difficulties of a complex management agreement, a potentially controversial funding arrangement, and an enormous capital cost were overcome through strong leadership, skilful negotiation and a willingness on the part of almost everyone concerned to make the project happen. At Chatelherault, on the other hand, the project was characterised by impotence, bureaucratic intransigence, and a failure of leadership that not only obstructed progress for several years but also sought to undermine the eventual solution by creating further obstacles for the council willing to take the project on. Even CCS, which might have seen its role as a champion of country parks, took a strangely muted role both as an advocate and as a potential funder at Chatelherault, whereas at Culzean it embraced both the project and its considerable costs with great enthusiasm. The difference can be explained to some

¹²⁷ Edinburgh: National Records of Scotland: SDD Ancient Monuments Branch archive DD27/4168: letter, P. Ogle-Skan, Ministry of Building and Public Works, to Marquess of Bute, 1 October 1970.

¹²⁸ R Harris: 'MBE for manager at Chatelherault', *Hamilton Advertiser*, date illegible.

extent by timing: Culzean was the first country park project, and benefitted from the shared desire for successful delivery as well as from an absence of criteria that might have limited eligible spending. It can also be explained by a shift in priorities; by 1987, the demand for countryside recreation was no longer as pressing as it had been in 1969. And proximity, and the need to demonstrate even-handedness, may also have come into play; the costs associated with Strathclyde were a powerful argument against further spend on northern Lanarkshire. Townhill Woods got funding at this time, but Chatelherault did not. Above all, though, is the difference in attitude of the SDD, whose wholehearted support for Culzean stands in marked contrast to their lukewarm interest in, and even their apparent willingness to sabotage, Chatelherault. This attitude can only reasonably be explained in terms of the antipathy from Westminster towards local government in general, and their unwillingness to countenance an exception to rigorous spending controls.

There is nevertheless a curious similarity between the two cases, in spite of their chronological difference: neither was, in reality, a recreation project. At Culzean, the opportunity provided by recreation funding was utilised essentially to allow diversion of funds towards the maintenance and upkeep of the historic house; recreation was, initially at least, a means to a different end. Similarly, the expenditure on the Home Farm visitor centre was directed, at least partly, at increasing the revenue stream obtainable from visitors, and not simply to improve the visitor experience. Chatelherault was in similar vein, a project essentially aimed at preserving the lodge building and using recreation funding to support this possibility. Although resource was allocated to recreation at Chatelherault, especially in improving the grounds, the main focus was always the historic centrepiece, with the country park possibility opening up

access to funds that could allow retention of the lodge. The secondary nature of recreation, not a problem in the Culzean project, was perhaps a further factor behind CCS' reluctance to commit more fully to Chatelherault.

It is also worth considering curious relationship of these two projects to agreed policy. Culzean, as has been seen, benefitted from a lack of detail as to what was expected from a country park, but still managed to be sufficiently distinct from the legislators' intentions to attract comment in this respect. Chatelherault was as close geographically to Strathclyde as any other scheme considered (and rejected) by CCS, but managed to achieve designation in spite of this; whilst there was complementarity between the active recreation provision at Strathclyde and the more passive and natural opportunities at Chatelherault, there was also the problem of resource concentration in one small area of Scotland. At both Culzean and Chatelherault, the outcome was pragmatic rather than based on evidence of need or other justification. Both studies entirely justify Glyptis' view of the importance of opportunism in country park development.¹²⁹

¹²⁹ Glyptis, *Countryside Recreation*, p. 89.

Chapter 7: Case Studies: Two New Spaces

Introduction

The case studies in this chapter examine two spaces that were not formal public open space before the deployment of funding under the Countryside (Scotland) Act 1967. Lochore Meadows was a large, heavily contaminated former colliery site, with significant levels of degradation and pollution, where countryside resources were used alongside land reclamation funding to create a large new recreational facility as part of a wider programme of rehabilitation of post-industrial landscape in that part of Fife. Aden was a former country estate, initially acquired for a large-scale housing project but subsequently allocated as recreational space, and used to promote agricultural heritage for the Buchan area. As with the previous chapter, the purpose of the case studies is to demonstrate the application of policy in two very different settings, allowing comparison between projects but also between the aims of the formal policy and its practical implementation on the ground.

Lochore Meadows (1976)

'It's all gone. The black, oppressive bings, the areas of slurry and waste, subsidence flooding and rotting rows of houses... transformed... into rolling green countryside around an attractive loch, and at the heart of this lies
Lochore Meadows Country Park.¹

Brochure, 1983

Lochore Meadows Country Park is a 920-acre (372 hectare) site in central Fife, between the villages of Kelty and Ballingry, northeast of Cowdenbeath. Owned by Fife Council, but now managed by a local countryside trust, it was formally registered in 1976, and is a detached part of the Lomond Hills Regional Park. Much of the area of the site is taken up by Loch Ore itself, which includes three islands; the remainder of the site is open grassland to the north of the loch, rough moorland to the south, and woodland at the western end. A visitor centre has been provided, with toilets and a cafe, and the loch is used for sailing, windsurfing and angling. Significant structures in this landscape are the ruinous remains of a 14th-century castle, and the concrete pithead structure that previously served the Mary coal mine, which was the park's predecessor. Footpaths provide access to Harran Hill Wood, an area of ancient woodland which was later acquired by Fife Council as an extension to the park, and to Benarty, a prominent local hill and viewpoint.²

¹ *Lochore Meadows Country Park*, brochure, 1983

² David Munro, *Lochore Meadows: The Making of a Fife Landscape* (Glenrothes: Fife Council, 2012), p. 46.



Figure 7.1: Lochore Meadows Country Park (Author's collection)

This case study explores the process which led to the creation of a country park on this site. Lochore Meadows is interesting because it began to take shape even before the passing of the Countryside (Scotland) Act in 1967, and because it had its origins in land reclamation; unlike many of its counterparts, it was thus a genuinely new site that had not had any formal recreational use before designation.

Most of the land now occupied by the park was an agricultural estate in the eighteenth century, but changed dramatically when mineral extraction became its main function. Three mines were sunk by the end of the 1870s, and extraction operations continued to expand into the twentieth century.³ By 1922 seven pits had been established around the area, with associated housing and amenities.⁴ However, coal

³ E. Henderson, *The History of Lochoreshire* (Kirkcaldy: Self-published, 1988), p. 230.

⁴ Munro, *Lochore Meadows*, pp. 38–39.

nationalisation in 1947 presaged reviews of profitability, and closures began in 1957, with the last pit shutting in 1966.⁵

In this part of Scotland in the 1960s, economic and social change was both rapid and dramatic. Seventeen collieries in central Fife closed between 1957 and 1967, devastating communities that depended heavily on them both economically and socially. In the Cowdenbeath area, the high degree of economic specialisation on coal also had severe consequences for the local supply chain, and the non-mining industrial workforce declined by around 60% in this decade.⁶ Although the National Coal Board (NCB) sought to redeploy as many miners as possible, this might mean relocation to England, or alternative employment away from Cowdenbeath. Depopulation was thus added to the challenge facing the authorities, with outward migration especially prominent among younger members of the mining workforce.⁷ There was also a huge environmental problem; the colliery sites were abandoned and, since the NCB had no obligation to remedy the damage to the landscape, were simply left to rot. Local council planners thus had to contend with the need to attract new employers, failure of the local economy, an increased level of unemployment, a changing age-structure in the local population, and dreadful environmental damage, all arriving simultaneously. The problems were further exacerbated by the failure, almost from the outset, of the new Rothes colliery intended to supersede the western

⁵ L. Cooney and A. Maxwell, *No More Bings in Benarty* (Glenrothes: Benarty Mining Heritage Group, 1992), pp. 92-94. Spoil heaps are known as 'bings' in Scotland.

⁶ J. McNeil, 'The Fife Coal Industry 1947-67: A Study of Changing Trends and Their Implications, Part Two', *Scottish Geographical Magazine*, 89.3 (1973), 163-79 (p. 171).

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 175.

Fife coalfield and drive the economy of the new town being developed around it at Glenrothes.⁸

Fife County Council's response to this situation addressed it on several fronts. A programme promoting the area for industrial development was helped greatly by the willingness of the government to provide relocation incentives; over 200 firms relocated into Fife in the 1960s.⁹ This investment was supported by new housing developments (both public and private), and new infrastructure including the Forth Road Bridge, an expanding Edinburgh airport and the planned trunk road connecting the Forth Bridge with Dundee.¹⁰ But the central Fife area received relatively little of this funding, and Cowdenbeath remained blighted by post-industrial decline. A survey carried out in the area found that 13.5% of the local land was derelict.¹¹

However, the new A92 connecting Edinburgh to the north-east would pass through this area, and Fife County Council were aware of the importance of appearances. In part, rehabilitation of former industrial land was seen as economically sensible, in that the land could be made productive again; it also made the area in question more appealing to would-be investors and to their employees. There was also a social dimension to the Council's position. A 1959 County Council report could see 'no reason why the living conditions of the people in our industrial areas should be soul-destroying, drab and in many cases unhealthy...the first achievement would be to improve the living conditions for all who have to live in our industrial

⁸ D.C.D. Pocock, 'Economic Renewal: The Example of Fife', *Scottish Geographical Magazine*, 86.2 (1970), 123–33 (p. 123).

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 127

¹⁰ McNeil, 'The Fife Coal Industry', p. 177.

¹¹ McNeil, 'Land Reclamation', pp. 147-148.

areas...reclamation could be the means of saving life.’¹² This report led to a commitment by the Council to rehabilitate derelict land, beginning with smaller projects but culminating, in the late sixties and early seventies, in the largest land reclamation scheme then undertaken in Britain – the restoration of Lochore Meadows.

This process was extremely demanding on resources, and although McNeil is probably right in suggesting that the Council needed to learn from experience on smaller projects, the small-scale beginnings of the reclamation programme were probably as much to do with cost as with anything else.¹³ But the process was helped greatly in 1960 by the passing of the Local Employment Act, which allowed municipal authorities to obtain funding of up to 50% for eligible land reclamation projects, and later by the White Paper for Central Scotland in 1963, through which development areas were established that included the Cowdenbeath region, and for which reclamation funding of up to 85% could be sought.¹⁴ However, reclamation funding was only permitted to restore the land to pasture quality, and any further development on the reclaimed site had to be funded from elsewhere. Fife County Council took its rehabilitation policy very seriously, branding it the 'Fife Facelift', with the twin aims of improving the prospects for inwards investment, and to show residents that the council was interested in their welfare, their environment and their economic future. The Council even prepared a film on the subject, and embarked on a series of talks to inform local communities as to its plans.

¹² *Retrospect 1958* (Cupar: Fife County Council, 1959).

¹³ McNeil, 'Land Reclamation', p. 149.

¹⁴ PP: Cmnd. 2188: *Central Scotland: A Programme for Development and Growth* (Edinburgh: HMSO, 1963). The 85% funding provision was included in the Industrial Development Act 1966, and subsequently in the Local Employment Act 1972.

Lochore Meadows was a large site of 640 hectares which exhibited all the environmental and visual problems associated with post-industrial dereliction. Alongside the former collieries were large spoil heaps of waste, some of which were believed to be burning internally at temperatures up to 1000°C. There were also substantial refuse tips, large areas of waterlogged land and slurry ponds, and several hectares of disused railways and associated structures.¹⁵ The *Dunfermline Press* described Lochore Meadows as 'four square miles of the most derelict land in Fife...the Industrial Revolution's squalid legacy of pit bings, bogs, and mineral subsidence lochs', while Arthur McGachie, an ex-miner, recalls 'the great bings, which...had been on fire for more than a year...dust and smoke were everywhere and the fumes were awful'.¹⁶ Mining and its legacy had brought about significant changes in the Lochore landscape, including the re-emergence of the loch itself, due to mining subsidence, as a 'stagnant, smelly, dirty pool' with the remains of a railway embankment now partly submerged in it, and the abandonment and subsequent demolition of Glenraig village, colliery housing made uninhabitable by the poisoned atmosphere.¹⁷

On the closure of the final pit in 1966, and using compulsory purchase powers, Fife County Council acquired the Lochore Meadows site from the NCB 'very cheaply' and with reclamation in mind.¹⁸ But rehabilitation of the site was being given active consideration as early as 1964; Maurice Taylor, the County Planning Officer, revealed that the idea had come to him as he stood on high ground looking over Lochore towards Benarty, using his hand to block out the collieries and bings from his view,

¹⁵ McNeil, 'Land Reclamation', p. 148.

¹⁶ Quoted by Cooney and Maxwell, *No More Bings*, pp. 95-97.

¹⁷ Munro, *Lochore Meadows*, p. 41.

¹⁸ Pers. Comm. W. Taylor retired Senior Planner at successive local authorities in Fife, 19 January 2012.

and realised the potential for environmental renewal in the area.¹⁹ This led to the Council commissioning a survey to explore the feasibility of reclamation, with the aim of creating a site that would provide a mix of agricultural land, space for industrial development, and substantial provision for recreation.²⁰ Taylor's report to the Council clearly positioned this project within the Facelift programme, but also echoed Michael Dower's 'Fourth Wave' argument for the provision of recreation space to address needs intensified by shorter working hours and increased leisure time: 'This reclamation scheme gives the County a great opportunity to create a regional centre where many... recreational requirements can be satisfied.'²¹

By April 1967, the Council had submitted an application for reclamation funding, which confirmed the ultimate intention to provide a country park on the site as part of the 'Fife Facelift'; this was approved in June, together with permission to use the resources element of the Rate Support Grant, effectively meaning that the SDD would fund up to 95% of the total cost, estimated at just under £1 million.²² The reclamation work was divided into six phases, beginning in 1967-68, and took eight years to complete.

The SDD had in the meantime called for Scottish local authorities to produce strategies for developing and managing tourism, and Fife was one of the counties that co-operated with this requirement. This also fell within Taylor's remit, so it is not surprising that his plan, published in 1967, references the Facelift in general and the work at Lochore Meadows specifically.²³ It notes the intention to provide limited industrial

¹⁹ Markinch: Fife County Council archives: FC/DS/5/2/16: undated paper by Maurice Taylor, c. 1966.

²⁰ Markinch: Fife County Council archives: Minutes of Planning Subcommittee, 18 February 1966.

²¹ Markinch: Fife County Council archives: Minutes of Planning Subcommittee, 8 March 1966; M. Taylor: Report to Fife County Council Planning Subcommittee, April 1966.

²² Markinch: Fife County Council archives: FC/DS/5/2/16: letter from Scottish Development Dept. to Fife County Council, 12 June 1967; Minutes of meeting of Fife CC Planning Subcommittee, 8 April 1966.

²³ M.E. Taylor, 'Tourist Survey and Development Plan' (Unpublished report, Fife County Council, 1967).

space through the Lochore Meadows scheme, while developing a regional recreational centre comprising 150 acres of land, and 130 acres of recreational water space – a smaller allocation for recreation than that which eventually emerged.²⁴ In an interesting choice of phrase, the plan recognised the 'muted beauty' of central Fife but drew attention to walking opportunities in the Lomond Hills, as well as the canoeing and angling potential of the new park, and suggested that a golf course would help to meet an anticipated population increase in this part of Fife.²⁵ In an echo of the 'honeypot' argument being used to advance country park legislation at the time, the plan also suggested that Lochore Meadows would attract visitors to Fife away from the charming and quaint but heavily congested villages of the East Neuk, thus relieving pressure on a vulnerable scenic area.²⁶ The plan envisaged Lochore Meadows supporting a range of recreational activity that would be difficult to contain in the space proposed; it is also hard to reconcile the argument of increasing demand with the background of depopulation in this area. What the plan does do, though, is position Lochore Meadows very firmly within the arguments being used to justify country park policy, and Taylor's intention may well have been to ensure, so far as possible, that the project would be well-placed for country park funding when the time came.

This approach can also be seen in a report commissioned by Taylor in 1968, when he invited Land Use Consultants (LUC), at the time a new organisation with only limited experience, to prove the concept of a country park at Lochore Meadows and to assess what facilities should be provided to meet local and regional needs.²⁷ This report was the first feasibility study ever undertaken on a country park in Scotland, and it reflects

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 62.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 1, 11, 16-18.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 51

²⁷ Herbert et al, *Lochore Meadows Reclamation*, p.1.

a good deal of uncertainty as to both the purpose of such a facility and the methodology needed to justify it. It might, for instance, be expected that any assessment of local need would begin with an exploration of demand, but LUC sidestepped this problematic issue by noting simply 'the question to be answered is not whether a demand exists, but merely how large it is' and by excusing their failure to follow the 'normal' approach for assessing demand on the grounds of lack of time and budget.²⁸ The report argued, conveniently, that the best approach would be a flexible one that would be able to respond to whatever demand might eventually materialise.²⁹ On the other hand, though, the report saw considerable potential for tourism at Lochore Meadows, strengthened by the Forth Road Bridge which put eight million people within a five hour drive, while the expanded airport at Edinburgh created a market within continental Europe, including among the owners of private aircraft.³⁰ It speculated about the possible spin-offs such as recreation-based industry, and emphasised the advantage of being close to a major road route towards the highlands.³¹ It also offered a list of ideas for recreational activities ranging from basic, easily implemented options through to complex and much more costly possibilities that were quietly abandoned later, including a hotel, holiday housing and a mining museum.³² Again sidestepping the requirements of the brief, it did not assess these possibilities against demand, or local need, but concluded that 'there is an amply demonstrated potential for establishing a country park at Lochore Meadows' – which no doubt was the conclusion they were expected to produce.³³

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 2.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 3.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 3-5.

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 12.

³² *Ibid.*, pp. 20-33.

³³ *Ibid.*, p. 39.



Figure 7.2: Heritage Pit structure at Lochore Meadows (Author's collection)

Bill Taylor, a Planning Officer in the council at the time, described the report later as 'not the best piece of work we ever did', and it is certainly easy to find serious flaws in the consultants' conclusions.³⁴ The report is transparently positive and uncritical, and it is unlikely that a document as poorly researched as this would be acceptable to planners today. The idea that a park (however attractive) near Cowdenbeath could attract masses of visitors from mainland Europe, or provide an alternative destination for those seeking Highland scenery, is clearly fanciful, while the range of activities identified was nothing more than a list of untested possibilities. Rather like the tourism strategy, it seems to have been written to reinforce a decision already made, rather than to inform one yet to be taken, positioning the country park positively and further justifying the funding that would be needed to make it happen.

³⁴ Pers. Comm. W. Taylor, 19 January 2012.

By 1975, when local government in Scotland was reorganised, the Lochore Meadows project was well-advanced, and the new Fife Regional Council inherited only the sixth and final phase, two colliery areas which were not intended for inclusion in the park itself. A major tree planting project, substantially funded by CCS, had been completed in the previous year, and the loch had been restored and embanked, and stocked with fish to support angling. A jetty was in place and sailing was available, and work was progressing with the Scottish Wildlife Trust on creating a small nature reserve, at the time an unusual feature in a recreational setting.³⁵ Provisional registration, a procedure invented by CCS to demonstrate progress on country park projects that were slow to reach fruition, was granted in September 1975, and CCS noted at the time that the park was already popular, even though it had yet to open formally.³⁶ An application for formal registration as a country park was submitted in 1976.

This submission presented a much more thorough appraisal of the situation. It explored contextual issues including the importance being given at the time to food production and forestry, citing a recent white paper on this subject. It also considered the role of the park within a wider strategy for recreation and leisure, including tourism.³⁷ It positioned Lochore Meadows once more as a regional facility, which would have potential to attract visitors from the nearby major population centres of Kirkcaldy and Dunfermline, but also with potential for interest from as far as Dundee and Edinburgh. The report provided a much more realistic assessment of the likely catchment area than LUC had offered, and was careful to place the park within a 'park

³⁵ M.E. Taylor, 'Lochore Meadows: Proposals for a Country Park' (Unpublished report, Fife Regional Council, 1976), p. 8.

³⁶ Edinburgh: National Records of Scotland: Countryside Commission for Scotland Archive: CCS3/8: application for provisional registration of Lochore Meadows Country Park, 9 September 1975.

³⁷ M. E. Taylor, 'Lochore Meadows Proposals', p. 3. The White Paper was Cmnd. 6020, 'Food from our own Resources' (London: HMSO, 1975).

system', showing how it would relate to other recreational facilities, both existing and planned.³⁸ This was a clever move that would be likely to find resonance at CCS, which was very enthusiastic about its own *Park System for Scotland*, published in 1974; Taylor's report intelligently applied the principles of this approach to the new Fife region, showing how Lochore Meadows was the result of strategic thinking about the recreational needs of the area and identifying several other possible recreational developments which it would complement through its own carefully planned provision.³⁹ With remarkable foresight as to the way policy would later develop, it even went further and considered possible long-distance footpath links between Lochore Meadows and other countryside, including a possible future country park north of Dunfermline.⁴⁰

The report also clarified the activities that would initially be promoted in the park, identifying four 'zones' of activity which would ensure adequate provision for, and separation of, water- and land-based activity, and active and passive recreation. The loch would provide for sailing and canoeing, but also for fishing and angling, separated by timetabling, while the land north of the loch would offer play space, picnicking, pony trekking and informal sports; a golf course would be created north-east of the loch.⁴¹ The land to the south, meanwhile, would be leased out to agricultural tenancy to be kept in reserve for possible recreational use later, and in the meantime providing a modest revenue income for the park. There would also be a focus on countryside interpretation, including the nature reserve at the western end of the loch, and a visitor

³⁸ M E. Taylor, 'Lochore Meadows Proposals', p. 4.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 10, 17.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 4-5.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 20.

centre to provide toilets, catering, and meeting room space for park users.⁴² A prioritised capital programme in the report retained, for the moment, the idea of a mining museum, but as a lower priority, and also the stabilisation of the ruined castle, which was considered dangerous but worth preserving.⁴³ A management plan for the site was in the course of preparation (this feature would later become a CCS prerequisite for formal registration) and work was beginning on interpretation and education.⁴⁴ CCS had recently held a conference on *Education and the Countryside*, and again Taylor showed his awareness of this by making extensive reference to the contribution Lochore Meadows would make in this respect, quoting the NTS representative at the event: 'it would surely be wrong to see a country park as simply a place where one can picnic and play... these visitors...deserve to be taught how to behave in natural surroundings and how to observe what is around them.'⁴⁵

Registration was duly completed in September 1976.⁴⁶ The total cost of the project was £5.9 million in 1976, while the capital outlay on the creation and furnishing of the park added a further £1 million over the succeeding years, generating a total cost (at 1996 equivalent values) of over £28 million, largely – but by no means entirely – funded by central government.⁴⁷

As a flagship project, Lochore Meadows became the focus of two further initiatives by CCS, addressing two key issues relating to country parks. The first of these was an

⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 8.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, pp. 13-14.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 22.

⁴⁵ R. Blair, NTS Countryside Adviser, quoted in M.E. Taylor, 'Lochore Meadows Proposals', p. 22.

⁴⁶ Edinburgh: Countryside Commission for Scotland archive CCS3/9: papers for meeting of CCS on 14 September 1976.

⁴⁷ McNeil, 'Land Reclamation', p. 148; Campbell, 'The Wood, Not the Trees', Appendix A; S. Morley, 'Historical UK Inflation and Price Conversion' <<http://safalra.com/other/historical-uk-inflation-price-conversion/>> [accessed 5 April 2016].

experiment whereby public transport was organised to connect Lochore Meadows with its surrounding communities. This scheme, which began in 1980 and ran for two years, has echoes of similar attempts in England, responding to a perception that the country parks were too much the preserve of affluent car owners, and needed to become more socially inclusive; part of Lambert's 'reorientation' phase.⁴⁸ The Lochore Meadows scheme, christened *Wee Mary the Country Bus*, was intended to widen the accessibility of 'a showpiece for countryside recreation'; it provided a Sunday-only, school holiday bus service linking Cowdenbeath, Kelty and Ballingry with the visitor centre at Lochore Meadows, connected with a scheduled bus service to and from Dunfermline, and was publicised through local newspapers and shop windows.⁴⁹ Take-up varied widely and was heavily weather-dependent, but the service was popular with older people and women, and with those households having no car, suggesting that it did indeed widen access.⁵⁰ In this respect it was more successful than several similar English schemes (Groome and Tarrant found that the English schemes they studied failed to extend the demographic profile of users) but, like its English counterparts, the level of subsidy it demanded proved financially unsustainable.⁵¹

The second scheme linked to Lochore Meadows was a joint project involving Fife Regional Council and CCS exploring awareness-raising, using Lochore Meadows as a pilot for a carefully designed and properly sampled leaflet-based promotion in the

⁴⁸ Lambert, 'History of the Country Park', pp. 49-50.

⁴⁹ CCS, *Wee Mary, the Country Bus: An Experiment in Transport to the Countryside for Recreation* (Glenrothes: Lomond Hills Project/CCS, 1981), pp. 2-3, 7.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 1.

⁵¹ CCS, *Wee Mary: A Report on the Second Year of an Experiment in Transport to the Countryside for Recreation* (Glenrothes: CCS/Fife Regional Council, 1981), p. 15. Groome and Tarrant, 'Countryside Recreation: Achieving Access for All?', p. 87. Similar transport schemes in England & Wales are described in Curry, *Countryside Recreation*, pp. 123-125.

two largest nearby population centres, of Kirkcaldy and Dunfermline. This was expected to test familiarity with Lochore Meadows in two communities that were well within its expected catchment, and to explore the potential for widening its audience into new socio-demographic groups.⁵² The project found that, although leaflet distribution was not universally effective, it did succeed in raising awareness by a factor of around 20%, and was similarly effective across all socio-demographic groups, regardless of age, gender or social class.⁵³ Leaflet-based marketing became the standard approach adopted by councils for their country parks, and it possible that the project provided some inspiration for this; but the ideas it generated were only rarely pursued more vigorously or imaginatively.

Lochore Meadows stands out as a case study in several important respects. However, it may have been dressed up in funding bids and consultants' reports, it is clear that neither the idea of the park, nor its eventual focus, were greatly influenced by the recreation arguments being used to justify the introduction of country parks. The key drivers behind the original policy, articulated by Dower, included a growing population, higher levels of disposable income, and increasing car ownership, all factors which were largely absent in the Fife coalfield and which were also considerably less prominent in central Scotland generally than they were in England at the time. In reality, this idea emerged from and was shaped primarily by the 'Fife Facelift', the need to make Fife a place where employers might relocate, and to improve local quality of life. The imperative of recreation was secondary, used to position the project favourably in terms of funding eligibility but not a prime mover. The real aims were by

⁵² CCS, *Promoting Lochore Meadows Country Park: Report on an Experiment* (Glenrothes: CCS, 1981), pp. 4 - 8.

⁵³ CCS, *Promoting Lochore Meadows Country Park, Summary*.

no means insignificant, but the project had to be differently positioned to attract the funding it needed.

It is also clear that this was a project that benefitted from opportunity. The reclamation funding was fundamentally important to its success, and it is impressive that it was made available on the scale needed to restore this site, without the delays that could have arisen over the NCB's legal or moral responsibility to address the dereliction on land they managed. The flexibility shown by the SDD in permitting the use of Rate Support Grant to supplement this funding also contrasts with their attitude to later projects such as Chatelherault. As to the country park funding, although this project only came to fruition in 1976, it is evident that discussion and negotiation with CCS was taking place at a much earlier stage, and that both Fife County Council and CCS believed it could be made to fit their respective agendas. Even before CCS had reached the point of defining a country park in their early policy documents, Lochore Meadows was already shaping up as an example of what such provision might look like, with early plans to offer the type of facilities and activities that would later be considered typical of the genre.⁵⁴

A striking feature of the Lochore Meadows story is the difficulty that LUC had in defining the need for the park, and the scattergun approach they took to considering the facilities it might provide. The policy was predicated on the need to provide for localised car-based casual recreation, but the LUC report instead positioned the park as a potential tourist attraction of European standing. Instead of looking at the gaps in existing recreational facilities in central Fife, LUC suggested a level and complexity

⁵⁴ Markinch: Fife County Council archives: M.E. Taylor: Report to Fife County Council Planning Subcommittee, April 1966.

of provision that far exceeded the space available and which had no demand-based justification, and defined its marketplace with a catchment area spreading geographically into Europe and socio-economically into those who owned private aircraft. The report demonstrated how difficult it was to prepare such a report with no frame of reference, either in the form of a predecessor study to use a model, or in the shape of definitive guidance from the authorities as to what they would look for in a funding application. LUC's approach to the blank sheet of paper they had to start from missed the opportunity to begin the process of definition, and instead took a more cautious line that ruled nothing out, perhaps fearing that to do otherwise might prejudice the project's eligibility or competitiveness for country park funding. Their approach illustrates the weakness inherent in a poorly-defined policy; nobody had any idea at this stage what precisely was required from a country park project, and the underpinning policy rationale, coupled with an absence of criteria to be met, provided too flimsy a foundation on which to develop with confidence.

It is also interesting to see the importance of appearances. Lochore Meadows was important to Fife because it was a visible reminder, first of dereliction and later of enterprise and transformative action. It became a priority because the improved A92, which passed nearby, was also a priority, and because the visibility of the site might discourage would-be investors and their employees from relocation into an economy that badly needed them. Very similar arguments were used to make the case for rehabilitation of the M74 corridor in north Lanarkshire.⁵⁵

The cost of the scheme cannot pass without comment, and there are those who believe that the costs involved in reclamation were excessive in relation to the benefit

⁵⁵ Stella Thornton, *The Politics of Strathclyde Country Park*, (Glasgow, Strathclyde University, 1984) p. 4.

secured. A. H. Dawson has assessed the cost of reclamation in Scotland at between six and twenty times the value of the resulting land, and argued that this was irrecoverable.⁵⁶ Certainly, the revenue to be obtained from restored agricultural land was small in comparison with the cost of reclaiming the land, with a park offering little revenue benefit. But this overlooks the spin-off economic gain from inward investment and new industrial sites, and above all ignores the quality of life dividend, always prominent in the political process. It seems cynical to judge reclamation purely on economic grounds, and inappropriate to ascribe the costs of reclamation anywhere other than against previous use of the land.

Lochore Meadows was promoted on several occasions as having a regional role. This was probably good politics; a large amount of money was spent on this site, and it would be important that the county's ratepayers should be convinced of the benefit. In practice, the park only partly operated in this way, and although visitor surveys must be treated with circumspection, they consistently show that the park's catchment was primarily local. A 1981 visitor study found that over half the visitors came from villages adjacent to the park, while a study the previous year found that 42% of those surveyed had walked to the park.⁵⁷ The bus service project was an attempt to address this, but failed to make itself financially sustainable, while the leaflet project showed the potential in marketing for widening the audience. However, this was never built on to any significant degree, and although almost all country parks came to promote themselves through leaflets, there was never a coherent marketing strategy either for

⁵⁶ A.H. Dawson, 'Putting Back the Land: The Adaptation of Environment and Settlement in Fife, Scotland, to the Closure of Coalmining', *Colloquium Geographicum*, 15 (1982), 127–47, cited by McNeil, 'Land Reclamation', p. 152.

⁵⁷ Fife Regional Council, 'Lochore Meadows Visitor Survey' (unpublished document, 1981); P.M. Cutler, 'A Study of Lochore Meadows Country Park, Fife' (Edinburgh: Unpublished Dissertation, 1980), p. 47.

the parks as a whole or for the individual sites. The main marketing efforts were largely passive, and the parks still rely heavily on people looking for information, rather than taking a more proactive approach to advertising their facilities and activities. Wider public awareness was always a challenge for the country parks, and in many instances is an issue they still struggle with.

What is also noticeable in the Lochore Meadows story is the rôle of one key individual: in this case, Maurice Taylor. The project was largely born out of his vision, and driven forward by his ability to position the park within existing and newly emerging frameworks that could provide the necessary finance. Thus, Lochore Meadows was identified first of all as a much needed 'Fife Facelift' project, and later as a potential country park, in both instances securing the acceptance in principle that would be needed to release funding. In this he was helped by government policy, similarly focussed on developing the economy of Central Scotland, and by the continued commitment, across an eight-year project lifespan, of Fife County Council.

Aden (1980)⁵⁸

'To provide the visitor with an opportunity for recreation in an area of considerable natural beauty and historical interest in such a way as to conserve and recreate the heritage landscape and enhance the wildlife habitat'

*Aden Country Park Management Plan, 1984*⁵⁹

Aden Country Park occupies a 230-acre site between the small villages of Mintlaw and Old Deer, around 30 miles north of Aberdeen, and 15 miles south of Fraserburgh, in the primarily agricultural Buchan area of Aberdeenshire. The site is the former home of the Russell family, and incorporates the ruined mansion house and a semi-circular set of estate farm buildings dating from the early nineteenth century and known as the 'round square'. This was described as 'one of the finest examples in North-east Scotland of a symmetrically planned service building complex associated with a historic manor house'.⁶⁰ It is a listed structure, restored as a farming museum and folklore archive. There is also a reconstructed farm, showcasing farming life from the era before large-scale mechanisation. Although Aden lacks any exceptional landscape features, it is an attractive site, largely open parkland and woodland, with several footpaths and trails; there is also a riverbank area and two small lochs. A Victorian arboretum has been restored, and there is a substantial camping and

⁵⁸ The name is pronounced 'Aa-den', with the emphasis on the first syllable.

⁵⁹ Banff and Buchan DC, 'Aden Country Park Management Plan 1984-1989' (Unpublished report, Banff and Buchan District Council, 1984), p. 7.

⁶⁰ Scottish Civic Trust, *New Uses for Older Buildings: A Manual of Practical Encouragement* (Edinburgh, HMSO, 1981), p. 142.

caravan site. Like many country parks, it offers picnic and play space, car parking and other visitor facilities.



Figure 7.3: The ruined mansion house, Aden Country Park (Author's collection)

Aden is a useful case study because it was a newly created site, not previously in use as public open space; because of the substantial financial outlay in acquiring the land, creating the park and adding its important heritage content; and because the site was developed by a District Council covering a relatively sparsely populated area.

The Aden estate was a great deal larger in the late nineteenth century, covering around 31 square miles and including 52 farms.⁶¹ But rising costs of maintenance and falling farm income in the early twentieth century put the estate into an unsustainable financial position, and in 1937 it was sold off; the land that is now Aden Country Park,

⁶¹ A. Hill, 'Aden - a Case Study in the Presentation of Regional Ethnology', in H. Cheape (ed.), *Tools and Traditions: Studies in European Ethnology presented to Alexander Fenton* (Edinburgh: National Museums of Scotland, 1993), 37 - 42 (p. 38).

which included the family home, was thereafter used primarily as a shooting estate and allowed to decay, a process that was hastened by military occupation during the Second World War.⁶² By 1974, when the then 378 acre estate was sold for £950,000 to Aberdeen County Council, it was the property of four absentee owners resident in East Anglia.⁶³

Land values are difficult to compare over time, because changes in land taxation, agricultural subsidy regimes, and the wider economic context all combine to affect prices. In this instance, the purchase was further complicated by the inclusion of listed buildings, cropping leases and sporting rights as well as the land itself. But the price paid, amounting to £2,500 an acre, seems high for a redundant Scottish estate in the mid-seventies, even with vacant possession. Land of this nature in Scotland was typically attracting a price of around £1,000 an acre in 1982, so it seems that the Council paid a premium to secure its desired site.⁶⁴ Hareshowe, a nearby farm, was purchased by the Council for just £1,833 an acre 15 years later.⁶⁵ There was a strong motive for purchase, though, and this is made clear in local structure planning for the district. The local plan highlighted continuing depopulation of rural Buchan, partly due to the better employment prospects being generated by the developing North Sea oil industry in Peterhead and Aberdeen, and the threat this depopulation posed to a traditional way of life in the farming communities.⁶⁶ The plan set out to stem this tide whilst maintaining the aesthetic qualities of the locality, and identified the provision of

⁶² A. Hill, 'Aden - Where the Present Meets the Past', *Aberdeen University Review*, 184, Autumn 1990 (1990), 292–99 (p. 293).

⁶³ Mintlaw: Aberdeenshire Museum archive: Disposition of Sale of Aden Estate, 25 July 1974.

⁶⁴ Valuation Office Agency, 'Agricultural Land Values', *Property Market 1982*, 1982 <<http://www.voa.gov.uk/dvs/property/MarketReport/1982/agriLandviews.html>> [accessed 5 January 2016].

⁶⁵ Edinburgh: National Records of Scotland: Countryside Commission for Scotland Archives. CCS3/35: papers for meeting 12 February 1990.

⁶⁶ Aberdeen County Council, *Deer District Local Plan* (Aberdeen, 1972), p. 49.

housing as a critically important intervention to stabilise the population.⁶⁷ One of the favoured locations for new housing was the small inland village of Mintlaw, which was selected both for its accessibility (at an important crossroads) and for the availability of land; the plan suggested a fourfold growth in the population of the village, from 750 in 1971 to 3,000 at an unspecified future date.⁶⁸ A subsequent report also highlighted the advantage of housing development at Mintlaw in helping the community to retain its local services and especially its secondary school.⁶⁹ Although Aden is not mentioned in either document, it seems likely that the planners had the estate in mind when thinking of large-scale development at Mintlaw. But they also saw the possibilities for open space on the site, as the decision record makes clear.⁷⁰ The Council set up a public meeting in Mintlaw to discuss the future use of the estate, and received support for proposals that included housing, open space and educational elements.⁷¹

Local government reorganisation in Scotland abolished Aberdeen County Council in 1975, before any progress had been made, and the land was disaggregated to the newly created Banff and Buchan District Council. It was at this time 'in an advanced state of decay', with woodland in desperate need of thinning, overgrown ponds and clogged-up drainage ditches, and the buildings badly deteriorated.⁷² Aden was still

⁶⁷ *ibid.*, p. 50.

⁶⁸ Banff and Buchan District Council, 'Development of Recreational, Leisure and Tourist Facilities, Aden Estate' (unpublished report, Banff, 1975), p. 2.

⁶⁹ T.C. Peattie, *Buchan: The Next Decade* (Aberdeen: Aberdeen County Council, 1973), pp. 3, 10.

⁷⁰ Aberdeen: Aberdeen County Council Archive: Minutes of Finance and General Purposes Committee, 11 January 1974.

⁷¹ Aberdeen: Aberdeen County Council Archive: Minutes of Planning Committee, 5 April 1974.

⁷² Banff and Buchan District Council, *Development of Aden Estate*, p. 2.

being used for shooting and grazing, and a pony trekking agreement was also in place, but any wider recreational use of the land at this time was wholly informal.

In spite of the clear original intention, the shadow authority envisaged significant recreational use from the outset, and moved quickly, approving a park in principle early in 1975.⁷³ Although Aden was again not formally mentioned, the commissioning of a feasibility report, and the absence of any discussion of alternative sites, either in the brief or in the eventual report, suggest strongly that Aden had already been provisionally identified as the preferred location. The feasibility study was ready by the end of 1975, and presented four alternative recreational proposals, including the possibility of creating a championship-standard golf course in an area where the sport was extremely popular and where many clubs had waiting lists.⁷⁴ But the thrust of the study steered councillors strongly towards a country park option, pointing out the variety of opportunities this would provide for local people and tourists alike. It noted the funding available through this approach, which could support restoration of the grounds and the farm buildings, and enable stabilisation of the ruined mansion house, while the farm buildings could be redeployed as a visitor centre with a cafe, toilets and display facilities.⁷⁵ This option would allow for the creation of a caravan and campsite, while the restored policies would support not only casual country walks but also fishing, canoeing and boating; areas could also be set aside for wildlife and nature interpretation.⁷⁶ The rationale highlighted educational possibilities, the provision of a destination for visitors; and (rather optimistically) the likelihood of a revenue return

⁷³ Aberdeen: Banff and Buchan District Council Archive: Minutes of meeting of Leisure and Recreation Committee, 3 February 1975.

⁷⁴ Edinburgh: National Records of Scotland: Countryside Commission for Scotland Archive: CCS3/9: Minutes of meeting 9 March 1976: Report on Aden Country Park.

⁷⁵ Banff and Buchan District Council, *Development of Aden Estate*, pp. 6–7.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 7.

from the investment, in the form of lettings and sales.⁷⁷ None of the other options was explored to this level of detail, or with such clear advantage, and it is not surprising that the report recommended the country park approach. Approval was duly given in early 1976, authorising an approach to CCS for their assistance and support, and the appointment of a ranger at Aden to manage the restoration and supervise public access.⁷⁸ The estate was already being used informally by local people to the extent that extra supervision was required at weekends.⁷⁹

The bid for country park status and for financial support was made promptly, and by March 1976 CCS was considering approval of 230 acres of the estate as a country park.⁸⁰ The application was supported by an early management plan, which made it clear that a good deal of attention would be given to historic interpretation.⁸¹ It expected Aden to 'tell the story' of the estate in the late nineteenth century, describing lifestyles and working conditions from the perspectives of both the lairdly family and their servants and estate workers. It is perhaps no coincidence that this proposal was developed as the television series *Upstairs, Downstairs* was at the height of its popularity; the plan suggested that visitors to the restored 'round square' would 'have a thirst for the way of life interpreted there'.⁸²

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 9.

⁷⁸ Aberdeen: Banff and Buchan District Council archives: Minutes of Leisure and Recreation Committee, 19 January 1976.

⁷⁹ Aberdeen: Banff and Buchan District Council archive: Minutes of Aden Estate Management Subcommittee, 10 March 1976.

⁸⁰ Edinburgh: National Records of Scotland: Countryside Commission for Scotland Archive: CCS3/9: Minutes of meeting 9 March 1976: Report on Aden Country Park. The remaining land, adjacent to Mintlaw village, was ultimately used for housing and related development.

⁸¹ Edinburgh: National Records of Scotland: Countryside Commission for Scotland Archive: CCS3/9: Minutes of meeting 9 March 1976: Report on Aden Country Park

⁸² Mintlaw: Aberdeenshire Museums Service archive: Miscellaneous Papers: 'Business Plan for Development of Aden Estate' (undated)

Aden was given its provisional registration in March 1976, benefitting from a policy change that allowed recognition before completion, in place of the previous requirement for completion of visitor facilities before designation.⁸³ CCS justified designation on the basis of a catchment population that was likely to grow (in contradiction to the forecast in the local plan) and on the lack of informal recreation facilities in the Buchan area, in spite of the presence of Haddo Country Park just 12 miles away which, it was argued, offered a complementary rather than a competing experience.⁸⁴

A further feasibility study was commissioned to report on possible uses for the buildings; this recommended stabilisation of the ruined mansion as a roofless shell. The consultants also proposed restoration of the farm square for use as a visitor centre, exhibition space and offices, with a significant interpretation and educational content, at an estimated cost of £198,000. The buildings would relate the story of the estate through formal exhibition and through restoration of some of the buildings – such as the former dairy and the living quarters – to look as they had in the past. Additional facilities deemed 'essential to the development of a country park' included play and picnic areas, function rooms and storage space.⁸⁵ Alongside this, a separate contract would be let to extend car parking, improve visitor flows, and landscape the farm square.⁸⁶

⁸³ Edinburgh: National Records of Scotland: Countryside Commission for Scotland Archive: CCS3/7: Papers for meeting 11 March 1975; CCS3/12: papers for meeting 10 January 1978.

⁸⁴ Edinburgh: National Records of Scotland: Countryside Commission for Scotland Archive: CCS3/9: Minutes of meeting 9 March 1976: Report on Aden Country Park.

⁸⁵ Mintlaw: Aberdeenshire Museums Service Archive, Acc 1858: 'Aden Country Park – Structural Report and Feasibility Study' (Peterhead, 1978, no pagination).

⁸⁶ W. Gillespie, 'Aden Country Park: Farm Square Landscaping Report' (Unpublished report, Glasgow, 1980). Gillespie had also undertaken the first Scottish country park feasibility study at Culzean in 1969.

These recommendations were approved in March 1978, and work was sufficiently progressed by early 1980 to allow a formal opening of the country park by the Conservative politician Willie Whitelaw, a member of the Russell family who had lived on the estate as a child.⁸⁷ By this time the central coach house was in use as an exhibition centre presenting the story of the estate, with costumed guides showing people round.⁸⁸ The semi-circular buildings had been made weatherproof pending full restoration, which was expected to be complete by 1985. Financial support had been agreed with both CCS and HBC, leaving the council to find around a quarter of the overall cost of 'this ambitious project', which made extensive use of recycled materials, even to the extent of collecting old slates from other derelict local buildings of similar vintage. The project attracted a good deal of interest locally and nationally, and although there were some who criticised the expenditure, they may have been reassured by the local paper's enthusiasm, and by the District Councillor's (somewhat misleading) assertion that the money was not coming from ratepayers, but from CCS, and would otherwise have been spent in Glasgow.⁸⁹ The Scottish Civic Trust chose Aden as an exemplar of good restoration practice, producing a sketch (**Fig. 7.4**) that showed how the completed round square would look, in the hope of inspiring similar projects elsewhere in Scotland.⁹⁰

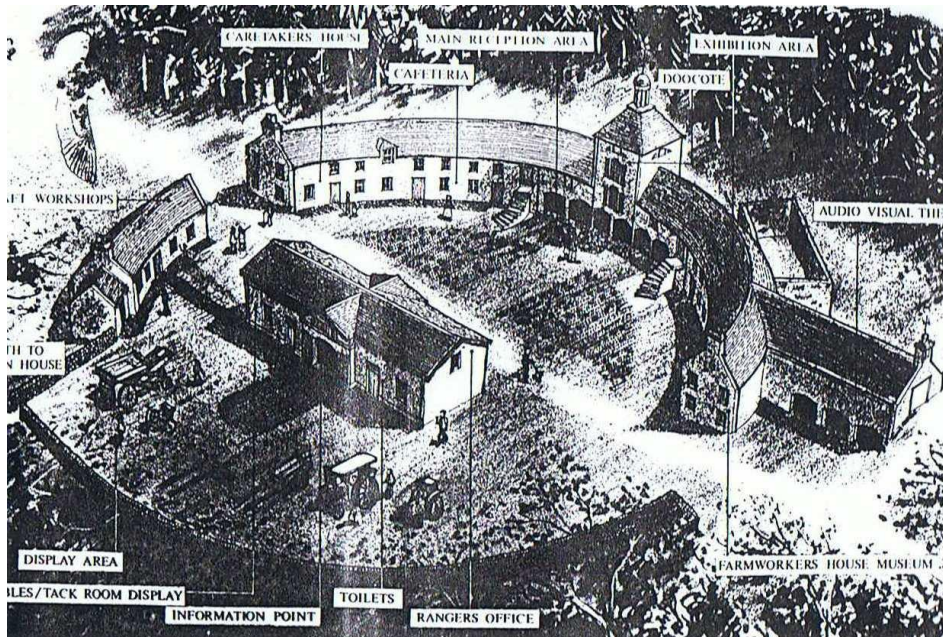
⁸⁷ William 'Willie' Whitelaw (1918-1999) was a Conservative MP who represented Penrith for nearly thirty years, and held several ministerial posts in conservative governments, rising to Home Secretary under Margaret Thatcher – who once famously stated that 'every Prime Minister needs a Willie' (Obituary, *The Independent*, 1 July 1999; PP HL Deb 18 June 2003 vol 649 cc809-22)

⁸⁸ *Press and Journal*, 25 August 1979.

⁸⁹ *Press and Journal*, 25 August 1979; *Buchan Observer*, 27 May 1980.

⁹⁰ Scottish Civic Trust, *New Uses for Older Buildings*, p. 142.

Fig. 7.4: Artist's Impression of the restored round square as it would be in 1985



Source: *Scottish Civic Trust, New Uses for Old Buildings: A Manual of Practical Encouragement* (© Scottish Civic Trust, used with permission).

CCS, and particularly its Assistant Director Magnus Fladmark, were keenly interested in interpretation at this time, and had set up a regional conference to explore the use of interpretation to enhance the visitor experience in the Grampian countryside. This took place in November 1976, describing itself as 'a co-operative planning exercise of a kind not previously attempted in Scotland, or possibly in Britain.'⁹¹ It had ambitious aims, seeking to explore interpretation not only as a means of raising visitor awareness and engagement in countryside conservation, but also as a tool for visitor management, diverting tourists away from more vulnerable sites and towards locations designed to absorb higher visitor pressure. The conference also sought agreement

⁹¹ J.M. Fladmark, *Regional Interpretive Planning in Grampian* (Aboyne: Countryside Commission for Scotland, 1976), Preface.

from participants on what aspects of the region should be chosen for interpretation, and on which sites and opportunities should be utilised and for what specific purpose.⁹² It brought together delegates from the public and voluntary sectors, both national and local, and also key interest groups such as landowners and farmers, using the 'Countryside in 1970' approach of preliminary study groups.⁹³



Figure 7.5: The restored Round Square at Aden (Author's collection)

This event emerges as an important milestone in thinking about recreational provision in Scotland, bridging the gap between the original, defensive nature of countryside policy that aimed to deflect people away from sensitive areas, and the later more inclusive policies that promoted greater visitor awareness of the sites being visited, as a basis for appreciation and conservation. The conference also enabled a strategic view of the countryside that sought co-ordination and co-operation between different

⁹² *Ibid.*, pp. 5-6.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, pp. 12–13.

organisations and providers, and aimed to reduce duplication and competition in the interest of a holistic and interdisciplinary visitor offer. It is directly relevant to the development of Aden Country Park in that Aden was identified by the Farming Study Group as a potential site for interpretation of the regional farming story, thus filling what the group perceived to be an important gap in local provision.⁹⁴ Andrew Hill, the first country park manager and curator at Aden, links the direction taken at Aden directly to this conference, echoing the earlier findings of a report produced by CCS and the Scottish Country Life Museums Trust that had identified the north-east of Scotland as an area with potential for an agricultural museum.⁹⁵ Although the conference's conclusions ultimately endorsed the plan to utilise Aden to exhibit estate life, it was the farming heritage that came to be the cornerstone of the project.⁹⁶ The project thus became an excellent illustration of Raphael Samuel's assertion that heritage is no longer the preservation of elite history but also the presentation of working life, old skills and lost crafts.⁹⁷

An opportunity to move further forward on this idea came in 1983, when the Adamston collection of agricultural implements and craft items, mainly from the north-east of Scotland, was put up for sale. This had been on display in a private museum at Huntly for several years, and the sale offered a unique chance to ensure that the collection remained in the north-east and available for public access. Banff and Buchan DC were keen to acquire the collection, and set a budget of £112,000 towards acquisition and display costs.⁹⁸ The project was endorsed by CCS, which identified only one other

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 38-39.

⁹⁵ Hill, 'Ethnology', p. 39.

⁹⁶ Fladmark, *Regional Interpretive Planning*, p. 57.

⁹⁷ Samuel, *Theatres of Memory*, p. 245.

⁹⁸ Aberdeen: Banff and Buchan District Council archive: Minutes of Aden Country Park Management Committee, 24 January 1983, and 30 January 1985.

potential purchaser, who they feared would use the collection less well; CCS were also strongly in favour of display at Aden, because of 'their previous investment ... and its designation as a country park'.⁹⁹ Acquisition was also strongly supported by the National Museum of Antiquities of Scotland, through its director, Professor Sandy Fenton.¹⁰⁰ The collection was duly acquired, and CCS part-funded a curator, whose remit included the development of a museum to house it.¹⁰¹ This became the Northeast of Scotland Agricultural Heritage Centre, and aimed 'to acquire, conserve, research and exhibit material [on] agricultural and rural life in northeast Scotland, from the eighteenth century to the present day, for the purposes of study and enjoyment by the public'.¹⁰² In furtherance of this, a factory unit was secured to provide a workshop and store, and was staffed and equipped for conservation work, and a new display area was also agreed at a further cost of £100,000.¹⁰³

A highly ambitious plan was written to build on the Adamston collection, which would take forward five interpretive themes. The existing estate story material would be retained, but alongside it would be an exhibition showcasing changes in agricultural practice over the 200 years covered by the collection, a walking trail linking Aden with the neighbouring estate village of Old Deer, a rural car trail around sites of rural interest

⁹⁹ Mintlaw: Aberdeenshire Museum Service archive: File note on meeting at National Museum of Antiquities of Scotland, 21 December 1982.

¹⁰⁰ Alexander 'Sandy' Fenton (1929-2012) was described in his obituary in *The Independent* (14 May 2012) as 'one of the very greatest scholars...of his age, or of any age.' A member of the Ancient Monuments Board, he also worked in Sweden, Germany and Hungary on antiquities matters. He wrote extensively on the northern isles, and on Buchan, and his book *Scottish Country Life* (1976) won a national award.

¹⁰¹ Aberdeen: Banff and Buchan District Council archive: Report from Gil Carling, Banff and Buchan DC to Aden Country Park Management Subcommittee, 30 January 1984; Minutes of Aden Country Park Management Subcommittee, 7 February 1984; A. Hill, 'The North East of Scotland Agricultural Heritage Centre: Interpretation at Aden', in J. M. Fladmark (ed.), *Heritage: Conservation; Interpretation; Enterprise*, (Wimbledon: Donhead, 1993), 203-213 (p. 205).

¹⁰² Hill, 'Aden - Where the Present Meets the Past', p. 296.

¹⁰³ Aberdeen: Banff and Buchan District Council archive: Report from Gil Carling, Banff and Buchan DC to Aden Country Park Management Subcommittee, 18 January 1985; Scottish Museum News, Summer 1987, p. 8;

in Banff and Buchan, and a working farm, which would provide an open-air exhibit of life on a Buchan farm in the period 1930-59.¹⁰⁴

In the meantime, the council had also updated its management plan for the country park, covering the five years from 1984-1989. This set out two main aims: the provision of space for the enjoyment of natural beauty, and the conservation and presentation of Aden's heritage assets.¹⁰⁵ The free admission policy was endorsed, and a review of facilities determined a need for new picnic areas, and for an arena where outdoor events could be held.¹⁰⁶ The planned developments were expected to increase both visitor numbers and the length of the park's visitor season.¹⁰⁷ The opportunity was also taken to consolidate the by-laws, originally drafted in 1982 and with an eclectic list of prohibited activities that included stone throwing, egg-collecting, public meetings, and mining.¹⁰⁸

The first new theme to be developed was the farming exhibition, launched as *Weel Vrocht Grun*¹⁰⁹ and opened in 1987 by Professor Fenton, who also contributed a guidebook setting the exhibition into a wider Buchan context.¹¹⁰ The exhibition consisted of a series of tableaux featuring agricultural implements and mannequins set against backdrops of agricultural scenes, augmented by a video presentation; the tableaux were captured on a short series of postcards available for purchase as souvenirs.¹¹¹ It was supplemented with open-air demonstrations, and an annual

¹⁰⁴ Hill, 'Agricultural Heritage Centre', p. 206.

¹⁰⁵ Banff and Buchan DC, *Management Plan, 1984-89* (Banff, BBDC, 1984) p. 7.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 10.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 14.

¹⁰⁸ Aberdeen: Banff and Buchan District Council archive: Minutes of Aden Country Park Management Committee, 12 October 1982.

¹⁰⁹ This means 'Well Worked Ground' in the Buchan dialect.

¹¹⁰ Alexander Fenton, *North-East Farming Life: A Companion to the Exhibition 'Weel Vrocht Grun'* (Banff: Banff and Buchan DC, 1987).

¹¹¹ Mintlaw: Aberdeenshire Museums Archive: Postcards from *Weel Vrocht Grun* exhibition.

agricultural show in aid of local charities was initiated.¹¹² The style of presentation appears dated to today's taste, but the project was hailed as a success and was credited with having doubled numbers using the visitor centre in its first year.¹¹³ It was marketed by the council as one of the area's major attractions, and also attracted sufficient interest nationally to receive a visit from the Museums Association of Great Britain, and an invitation to participate in the Glasgow Garden Festival in 1988.¹¹⁴

Weel Vrocht Grun meant that two of the five planned interpretive strands had been delivered; the council now embarked on the most challenging of all, the establishment of a heritage working farm which would bring these farming practices to life: 'what is plainly missing [at Aden] is an opportunity for the visitor to experience traditional farming at first hand.'¹¹⁵ A feasibility study was commissioned in May 1989.¹¹⁶

The conceptual basis for the working farm was rooted in the model afforded by Scandinavian open-air museums, which (it was noted) had buildings, implements, crops and animals all consistent with the period being modelled. The consultants drew attention to the Frilandsmuseet in Copenhagen, which included both static exhibits and real livestock, and which was characterised by attention to authenticity; they also acknowledged Skansen (Stockholm), and Cultra (Co. Down), among others, as examples.¹¹⁷ The Agricultural Museum at Ingliston, near Edinburgh, was not considered a potential competitor because it had failed to follow the Scandinavian

¹¹² *Scottish Museum News*, Summer 1987, p. 9.

¹¹³ Hill, 'Agricultural Heritage Centre', p. 207.

¹¹⁴ Aberdeen: Banff and Buchan District Council archive: Minutes of Aden Country Park Management Committee, 25 September 1985 and 27 May 1986.

¹¹⁵ Aberdeen: Banff and Buchan District Council archive: Report from Gil Carling, Banff and Buchan DC to Aden Country Park Management Subcommittee, 6 March 1987; Hill, 'Ethnology', p. 41.

¹¹⁶ Aberdeen: Banff and Buchan District Council archive: Minutes of Aden Country Park Management Committee, 25 May 1989.

¹¹⁷ Ian White Associates, 'Development and Management Study for a Working Farm at Aden Country Park Part One: Concept and Development' (Unpublished report, Stirling, 1988), pp. 7–13.

model sufficiently closely.¹¹⁸ The consultants recommended setting the working farm in the period when mechanisation began to take over from horse-power, constructing and working an authentic 30-acre farm as it would have been in that period and following the course of the farming year and crop rotation cycle.¹¹⁹ Although a replica building was considered, it was ruled out after a Danish museums expert challenged its likely authenticity; this effectively committed the council to acquiring and relocating a suitable existing property, a strategy which was estimated to require a capital outlay of £324,000.¹²⁰ This would, if no external support could be secured, bring Banff and Buchan's investment at Aden to around £950,000 since the initial decision to create a country park, and would add a further £45,000 annually to its already substantial running costs of over £300,000.¹²¹ But it was expected to generate a further 75,000 visitors per year, as an attraction of far more than local significance, and could become 'the most important open-air museum facility in Scotland'.¹²² This would set it apart from the other 24 museums of 'folk and agriculture' already in existence in Scotland, and give Aden a unique offer in comparison to the three other country parks in the region.¹²³ The consultants, who already had a farm in mind for this project, also warned of the risk of Aden reaching a plateau in visitor numbers without further development to satisfy the aspirations of an increasingly demanding visitor market.¹²⁴

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 15.

¹¹⁹ Hill, 'Ethnology', p. 41.

¹²⁰ Mintlaw: Aberdeenshire Museums Service archive: Report to Aden Country Park Management Subcommittee, 25 May 1989.

¹²¹ Aberdeen: Banff and Buchan District Council archive: Aden Management Subcommittee meeting 25 May 1989: Report on Working Farm Feasibility Study, p.2.

¹²² Ian White Associates, 'Development and Management Study', p. 4.

¹²³ Piedad Consulting, 'Development and Management Study for a Working Farm at Aden Country Park Part 2: Financial Appraisal'(Unpublished report, Edinburgh, 1988), p. E5.

¹²⁴ Ian White Associates, 'Development and Management Study', p. 28; Piedad Consulting, 'Development and Management Study', p. 6.



Figure 7.6: Hareshowe farmhouse, Aden Country Park (Author's collection)

In the end, Banff and Buchan DC allocated £100,000 towards the eventual capital cost of the project, in spite of 'restrictions and many demands on [a] limited capital budget'.¹²⁵ Fortuitously, Hareshowe of Ironside, a farmstead from exactly the desired period and location, came up for sale, and was purchased, painstakingly dismantled, removed and reconstructed at Aden, with CCS contributing 60% of the purchase price, and a further 25% of the costs of reconstruction.¹²⁶ Hareshowe opened to visitors in 1991 to what Hill described as 'a very favourable visitor response'.¹²⁷

Nor was this the end of development at Aden; the pressure of visitor numbers was deemed sufficient for the Council to add a further 60 acres of land and new visitor facilities in 1995; it also sought, unsuccessfully, to develop holiday chalets at a cost of

¹²⁵ Hill, 'Ethnology', p. 41; *Press and Journal*, 31 October 1990.

¹²⁶ Aberdeen: Banff and Buchan District Council archive: Papers for meeting of Aden Country Park Management Subcommittee, 21 May 1990.

¹²⁷ Hill, 'The North East of Scotland Agricultural Heritage Centre', p. 211.

£1.5 million.¹²⁸ And the incoming Aberdeenshire Council inherited a £950,000 proposal for a new restaurant and shop complex when it superseded Banff and Buchan DC at local government reorganisation in 1996.¹²⁹ By that time, there were 37 staff employed at Aden; in the last years of operation of the estate, it had run with just 23.¹³⁰

Aden's development provides an interesting case study, not least because the outdoor recreational purpose of the park was always accompanied by the provision for heritage and interpretation on the site. Aden clearly benefitted from the willingness of the council to exemplify a new standard of interpretation being actively promoted by CCS; the commitment of Andrew Hill and his employers to ambitious interpretive projects such as *Weel Vrocht Grun* and Hareshowe Farm coincided with the enthusiasm of Magnus Fladmark at CCS for a strategic approach to educational use of heritage. Once Aden was established as a country park with heritage capability, this meant it was the natural place to focus further heritage resources, although this approach was not always successful; a seemingly logical proposal to integrate the Cook collection of implements, held by the NTS just twenty miles away at Pitmedden, failed because this contravened the donor's conditions, while the opportunity to purchase the Tifty collection in 1983 passed because the agencies could not move sufficiently quickly.¹³¹ But the principle nevertheless allowed Aden to go virtually unchallenged as the place to site first the Adamston collection and later the working farm, in spite of its relative

¹²⁸ *Press and Journal*, 18 March 1994; 15 June 1994.

¹²⁹ *Press and Journal*, 14 November 1995; 26 February 1996.

¹³⁰ Mintlaw: Aberdeenshire Council Museums service archive: Aden Country Park miscellaneous papers.

¹³¹ Aberdeen: Grampian Regional Council archive: Planning, Property and Development Committee minutes, 18 April 1979; Banff and Buchan District Council archive: Aden Country Park Management Subcommittee minutes 24 January 1983. The Tifty collection, of 122 agricultural implements, was eventually donated to Aden in 1986 (Subcommittee minutes 30 October 1986), but the Cook collection became the basis for a separate museum of farming life at Pitmedden.

remoteness. It is also interesting in that the original intention to showcase estate life was largely superseded by the emphasis on agriculture and everyday working life: as Samuel states, 'at some of the working farms...it requires an effort of will to remind oneself that the parson and squire ever existed, let alone...lorded it over the lives of tenants.'¹³² At Aden, the squire was memorialised by a ruin and some exhibition panels; his tenants by a working farm, and a large exhibition of their lives, their tools and how they were deployed.

A curious aspect of Aden is that it was developed by a District Council. This was not unusual in Scotland, but it sits oddly alongside the three other country parks in the region, all of which were developed and managed by Grampian Regional Council (GRC). Country parks were generally considered as strategic provision, especially after the publication of the *Park System* in 1974, and were therefore more naturally a regional responsibility, but GRC seems to have had no issue with Banff and Buchan taking Aden forward. Regional Councils were also much better resourced, both financially and in staff capacity, for country park development work, but although GRC's financial support for Aden was sought at various times, Banff and Buchan DC was largely able to resource its ambitious plans in-house. The secret here is in the land ownership and allocation; had the estate been earmarked for recreation by Aberdeen County Council, it might well have passed to GRC in 1975, and been developed differently. As a putative housing site, it naturally passed to the housing authority in the form of the District Council.

The expenditure on Aden was colossal by any measure though, and was astonishing for a small and sparsely populated district with a limited rating base. But Banff and

¹³² Samuel, *Theatres of Memory*, p. 281.

Buchan was a relatively wealthy district. The local newspaper reported in 1980 that the Council had a revenue surplus of £3 million, which would need to be spent, lest it be lost to central Government.¹³³ The Council was also able to use its own spending capacity to lever in funding from elsewhere; CCS' contribution to Aden, over the years, has been calculated at over £820,000 in capital – the third largest total for all country parks in Scotland – and a further £125,000 in revenue support.¹³⁴ And CCS was by no means the only source the Council was able to exploit. As was the case elsewhere, Aden's status as a country park was used to justify this level of support, much of which contributed to the heritage aspects of the site rather than to recreation *per se*.

It also seems to have passed under the radar of those taking a greater interest in local authority spending in the 1980s. There were concerns over costs, nevertheless; this is unsurprising given the ongoing revenue losses at Aden, which in 1990 had persisted for over a decade, and were running at over £350,000 a year in spite of record income of nearly £100,000.¹³⁵ As early as 1986, before the Museum opened, councillors had expressed concern over expenditure at Aden, and urged exploration of ways of generating income to offset this.¹³⁶ The response pointed to Aden's role as a major tourist attraction, and added that it was 'one of our few leisure facilities of any quality...developed at very low cost to the District Council, as every opportunity has been taken to obtain grants or funding from outside sources.'¹³⁷ Indeed the Council's long-held view seems to have been that Aden was a means of attracting visitors to the

¹³³ *Buchan Observer*, 8 July 1980. Moreover, a revenue surplus of this magnitude may have been more than just a single occurrence.

¹³⁴ Campbell, 'The Wood, Not the Trees', appendices A and E. Figures are 1996 equivalent values.

¹³⁵ Aberdeen: Banff and Buchan District Council Archive: Revenue Estimates Aden Country Park, 1989-90

¹³⁶ Aberdeen: Banff and Buchan District Council Archive: Policy and Resources Committee, minutes 27 February 1986.

¹³⁷ Aberdeen: Banff and Buchan District Council Archive: Aden Country Park Subcommittee papers for meeting 30 October 1986.

locality, that the heritage dimension lengthened the season over which visitors could be enticed to the district, and that this justified the levels of investment in the site.¹³⁸ Admission or parking charges were considered in 1982, 1989 and 1991 but were rejected each time; councillors were advised in 1989 that charging would not be viable in Scotland and that other regional museums in Scotland did not charge.¹³⁹ This was disingenuous; although most country parks offered free admission, the feasibility report on Hareshowe had noted that, of the 24 farming and folk museums in Scotland, 22 levied admission charges.¹⁴⁰

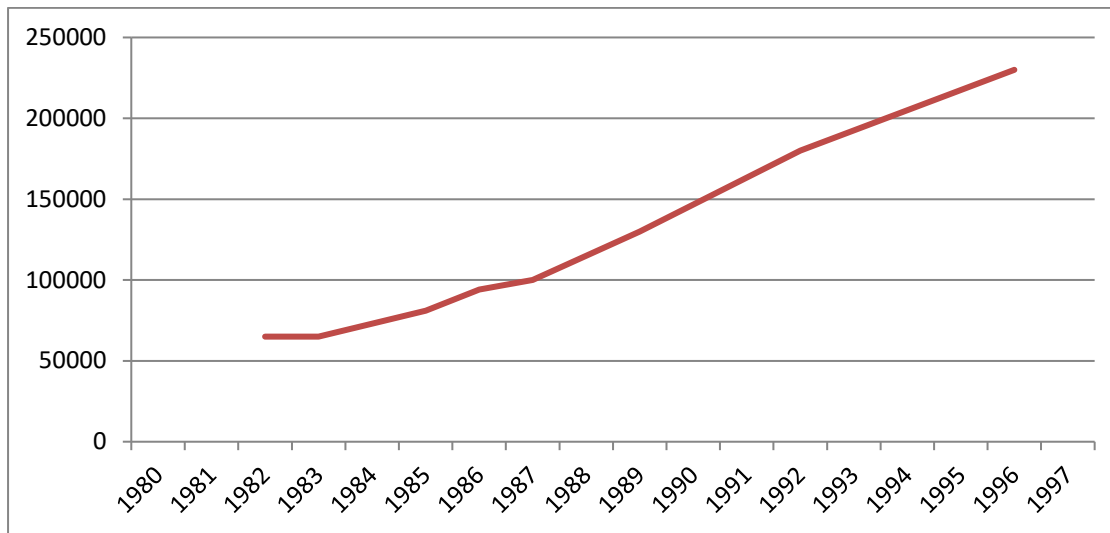
Visitor numbers for parks are fraught with difficulties over accuracy, and Aden is no exception, so visitor numbers must be treated with a measure of circumspection; but information was collected at various times, and the data paints this picture:

¹³⁸ Aberdeen: Banff and Buchan District Council Archive: Aden Country Park Subcommittee minutes 27 May 1986.

¹³⁹ Aberdeen: Banff and Buchan District Council Archive: Aden Country Park Management Subcommittee Minutes 7 February 1982, 16 April 1991; Aden Country Park Consultative Committee papers for meeting 27 September 1989.

¹⁴⁰ Pidea Consulting, 'Development and Management Study', p. E5.

Fig. 7.7: Reported annual visitor numbers at Aden, 1980 - 1997



Sources: *Pieda Consulting, Development and Management Study; Aden Country Park Management Plan; Press and Journal 9 July 1992, 26 February 1996; STB visitor data, 1986. Data interpolated for missing years using least squares curve fitting.*

The numbers began modestly, but as the visitor facilities took shape growth began, and was sustained throughout the period, reaching around 230,000 in 1996. Impressive as this may be, the numbers do not compare well; Haddo reported 143,000 visitors in 1987, when Aden had just 100,000, while the 29 least visited country parks in 1985 attracted an average of 108,000 visitors, against Aden's 81,000.¹⁴¹ These figures, from just before the museum opened, reinforce the consultants' argument that Aden needed to do more if it was to compete effectively; but they also highlight the difficulty of locating in a sparsely populated area. Aden was only the fifth most popular visitor attraction in the region, attracting relatively little interest from the major population centre of Aberdeen; half of its visitors in 1982 came from less than 20 miles away.¹⁴² It is open to question whether a farm museum could ever address the

¹⁴¹ Grampian Regional Council, *Country Parks Visitor Survey 1987* (Aberdeen, GRC, 1988), p 48.

¹⁴² Pieda Consulting, 'Development and Management Study', pp. 4–5..

numbers issue effectively; even the most successful of Scotland's other agricultural heritage ventures only achieved 40,000 annual visitors, and most struggled with less than half this number.¹⁴³

Conclusion

Although both Lochore Meadows and Aden were developed specifically to provide recreational facilities, neither was intended solely for recreational purposes. Lochore Meadows was clearly aimed at land rehabilitation and environmental improvement, while Aden adopted a focus on agricultural heritage from its earliest days, and expanded this interest enthusiastically as opportunities presented themselves. Country park funding provided extensive recreational facilities at both sites, and recreation was more fundamental than at either Culzean or Chatelherault, but nonetheless the possibility of utilising country park funding for wider community benefit, and the willingness to exploit the opportunity to gain value additional to pure recreation, were grasped fully in both these cases. As with the other case study sites, these also justify Glyptis' opportunism in that country park funding enabled a wider agenda to be secured.¹⁴⁴

Both these parks looked beyond the provision of recreational opportunity and into wider areas of public engagement. Aden's heritage emphasis became the main focus of investment in the site, with significant spending on the 'round square', the development of the agricultural collection, the exhibition, and the working farm

¹⁴³ Pidea Consulting, 'Development and Management Study', p. 13. This was the Highland Folk Museum at Kingussie.

¹⁴⁴ Glyptis, *Countryside Recreation*, p. 89.

combining to dwarf the spend on more general recreation. At Lochore Meadows, heritage was less emphasised, and only interpreted to a limited extent, largely in literature and poster displays, with a commissioned history of the site augmented by leaflets. On the ground, the emphasis has tended towards environmental enhancement, beginning with the nature reserve but later extending into the acquisition of ancient woodland and the protection of the island environments within the loch. In neither case was recreation alone deemed sufficient to justify the facility in its entirety. At both sites, however, the heritage focus has been very much on the experience and skills of the workforce, rather than of the former role of the country estate.

Although both sites were new provision, neither was completely ignored for recreation before country park status. Aden was used for field sports and pony trekking under formal agreement, but was also evidently in use for informal recreation by local people from an early stage after its acquisition by the council. Reminiscences from the villages around Lochore also indicate that pollution did not deter informal recreational use of the former colliery land and water for walking, or even angling, before restoration. To some extent, then, country park status confirmed what was already taking place informally, legitimising it and also making specific provision that would allow more closely-managed use of the land.

The parks also reflect individual vision. At Lochore Meadows, the park was essentially planned and developed by Maurice Taylor, who worked tirelessly to keep his council engaged and committed to the project. At Aden, the way the park developed reflects the enthusiasm of Magnus Fladmark for educational deployment of heritage assets and for the introduction of Scandinavian approaches to interpretation and display. In

both cases, CCS was content to support the expenditure, including elements that were not explicitly recreation-focussed. At Aden, Fladmark's dual role as an Assistant Director of CCS with a more than passing interest in the site undoubtedly helped to garner CCS support that might otherwise have been more problematic – the Adamson Collection may have been worth acquiring, but it could have been difficult to fund within a budget for recreational provision – while at Lochore Meadows, CCS' pressing need for additional country parks within the portfolio, and the impressive flagship nature of the project, allowed the park to be presented in different ways to different audiences – as a park, for countryside funding, and as a facelift, for purposes of regeneration and economic development.

Chapter 8: The country parks that never were

‘There is fairly considerable room for manoeuvre in what may be thought suitable for recognition as country parks.’

*CCS minute, 1969.*¹

Introduction

Although 36 country parks were registered with the Countryside Commission for Scotland (CCS) during its lifetime, the number of sites given consideration as possible country parks was over three times greater than this, especially in the early years of the Commission before any definitive work had been completed on eligibility criteria or expectations as regards the nature of country parks and what they might offer visitors. This chapter explores the background to the many unregistered sites, and works towards an understanding of the way in which eligibility, and with it wider policy, developed from the original legislation, through examination of a small group of sites that were actively considered for possible country park development, but which never arrived at formal designation during CCS’ lifetime. It follows a chronological approach, so as to illustrate how policy (and its application) evolved across the time period.

Early applications and issues

Guidance on what form a country park might take was sparse. The government was far clearer about the results it expected – space for countryside recreation, an easing

¹ Edinburgh: National Records of Scotland: Countryside Commission for Scotland archive: CCS 6/1: Minutes of Management and Projects committee, 2 June 1969.

of pressure on vulnerable scenic areas, and reduced damage to rural enterprise – than it ever was about how these might be achieved. The 1966 White Paper for England and Wales suggested that grant could be sought for land acquisition, landscaping, car parks and toilets, litter removal and ranger services.² But it failed to offer any further guidance on identifying suitable sites. CCS' initial work to delimit the Scottish countryside was intended to prevent countryside funding from being absorbed by urban needs, but other eligibility criteria were not developed until later. The consequences of this were felt almost immediately, with an application in 1968 from West Lothian County Council for a Bathgate Hills Country Park, which had to be deferred until a basis for determining it could be agreed.³

Although the Bathgate Hills proposal was rejected, the submission bears closer examination. It covered an area of 6,200 hectares (24 square miles), with multiple land uses and ownerships.⁴ It was thus predicated on the lines of an English national park, albeit on a much smaller scale, under diverse ownership and with recreation integrated with other land uses. The proposal made extensive reference to the wording of the Act, evidently seeking to demonstrate its fulfilment of the legislative objectives; it highlighted the absence of any stipulation requiring unified ownership, as well as the proximity of the land in question to large urban areas including the nascent Livingston New Town.⁵ It pointed out that the use of the area for farming and forestry offered opportunities to educate visitors in these respects, as well as providing locations for a variety of active and passive recreational pursuits ranging from walking

² PP: Cmnd 2928: *Leisure in the Countryside*, p 7.

³ Edinburgh: National Records of Scotland: Countryside Commission for Scotland Archive: CCS3/1, Minutes of meeting 24 June 1968.

⁴ E.J. Hutton, 'Bathgate Hills Country Park' (Unpublished report, West Lothian County Council, 1968), p. 1.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 1.

and picnicking to moto-cross and car rallies, sports that were highly disruptive and for which country parks might have been seen as a possible solution.⁶ Twenty-nine potential partner bodies were identified, and an outline plan set out how key infrastructure elements such as car parks, toilets, footpaths, transport links, visitor accommodation and viewpoints could be created. West Lothian thus demonstrated a strong awareness of the legislative provision, and of the key ingredients that might constitute a successful country park, and anticipated much of what would later be required from applicants. For a brief period, they treated it as a *fait accompli*, even going so far as to publish an illustrated guide identifying places of interest, and trails that visitors might follow to encounter both the natural beauty and built heritage of what they freely described throughout as ‘West Lothian’s great country park’.⁷



Figure 8.1: Part of the Bathgate Hills area, West Lothian (Author's collection)

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 2.

⁷ D. Whyte, *Bathgate Hills Country Park: An Illustrated Guide* (Linlithgow: West Lothian County Council/West Lothian History and Amenity Society, 1970), p. 7.

This application must have been problematic for CCS, arriving before any clarity had been achieved about the expected size and character of a country park. Bathgate Hills could not be approved, but CCS had no formal grounds for rejection, and was prompted to begin defining criteria against which applications could be assessed. In the meantime, further schemes were emerging, including one at Allanton, near Shotts; this relatively modest proposal had some merit, but was rejected on the grounds of proximity to the existing resource-hungry development at what later became Strathclyde Country Park.⁸

The Strathclyde project was a massive 648ha land reclamation and regeneration scheme on the former Hamilton estates near Motherwell, devastated by decades of mineral extraction and land contamination. It was managed by a partnership of local authorities and other public bodies, and was politically important due to its location, adjacent to the new M74 motorway and highly visible to anyone travelling towards Glasgow. Originally proposed in 1946, the idea was revived in 1964, and detailed proposals had secured Government funding by 1970 when ‘the Government was embarrassed into taking action’ by fears that the vast and highly visible derelict eyesore would blight inward investment into the west of Scotland.⁹ The costs of the project, however, escalated tremendously, from an original budget of £3.6 million to a final spend of £12.5 million, plus an additional £7 million levy imposed on British Steel to inhibit future pollution, whilst some of the plans had to be scaled back to contain further cost increases. However, the SDD assured CCS that funding Strathclyde

⁸ At this point, the Strathclyde project was under way but had yet to be classified as a country park; it would clearly fulfil a recreational role, however.

⁹ Thornton, *The Politics of Strathclyde Country Park*, pp. 5-6. The quotation is from Thornton’s interview with Bernard Scott, who chaired the Project’s Joint Management Committee.

would not unduly distort the countryside grant programme, a position from which they later stepped sharply back.¹⁰

The scale of the Strathclyde project evidently inhibited the chances of other sites in the Clyde valley from obtaining countryside funding. Allanton was the first to be affected, but Dalziel Park, in Motherwell, proposed as a country park in 1973, was also rejected. CCS took the view that Dalziel should remain a local and informal park rather than seeking to emulate its near neighbour at Strathclyde, but nevertheless provided funding to improve the park's recreational offer.¹¹ Concerns over Strathclyde's financial implications for other sites were raised with SDD, the project's main sponsors (and CCS' paymasters), in 1972, and again in 1973, when SDD conceded that cuts in public expenditure being implemented to mitigate the national financial situation were creating difficulties for countryside spending, but insisted that 'you will realise that we must go ahead on Strathclyde Park.'¹² The issue emerged again in 1974, when CCS protested that it was having to turn down good schemes because of the increasing commitment to funding Strathclyde.¹³ One such project was the proposed country park at Roslin Glen, near Edinburgh, where land acquisition had been funded by CCS in 1971.¹⁴ A request for registration in 1975 was accepted as meeting the criteria, but was not taken forward due to a shortage of available grant funding.¹⁵ Funding was

¹⁰ Edinburgh: National Records of Scotland: Countryside Commission for Scotland archive: CCS6/3: Papers for Management and Projects Committee, 28 January 1970.

¹¹ Edinburgh: National Records of Scotland: Countryside Commission for Scotland archive: CCS3/6: Papers for meeting 9 July 1974; Papers for meeting 12 June 1973.

¹² Edinburgh: National Records of Scotland: Countryside Commission for Scotland archive: CCS3/3, Minutes of meeting 13 September 1972; letter from A.S. Neilson, SDD, in papers for meeting 11 September 1973.

¹³ Edinburgh: National Records of Scotland: Countryside Commission for Scotland archive: CCS3/6: Papers for meeting 8 October 1974.

¹⁴ Edinburgh: National Records of Scotland: Countryside Commission for Scotland archive: CCS6/4: Papers for Management and Project Committee, 24 March 1971.

¹⁵ Edinburgh: National Records of Scotland: Countryside Commission for Scotland archive: CCS3/6: Papers for meeting 11 March 1975.

still the problem with Roslin Glen in 1990, though, when Strathclyde had long since been completed; although it met the new criteria being used at this time, in particular by being close to the urban fringe, it never achieved registration under CCS.¹⁶

By mid-1969, and still in the absence of any assessment framework, fourteen further proposals were under active consideration by CCS; these included two further large-scale proposals along similar lines to Bathgate Hills, from Fife and Peebles-shire, indicating that West Lothian were not alone in their interpretation of the legislation as suggestive of a national park-type approach.¹⁷ Of the fourteen proposals, only six eventually succeeded in securing registration, with just one other – Lanark Loch – pursued with any vigour. Several unsuccessful applicants, however, parallel comparable sites that were designated. Silver Sands, near Aberdour, a coastal site with hinterland, would have been an unusual choice as a country park, but not more so than Balmedie (Aberdeenshire), which did secure registration, while Amisfield, a large country estate at Haddington that was already a public park, appears no less eligible than the similar-sized, and designated, former estate at Almondell, near Livingston. Glasgow Corporation's land at Bishop Loch, also on this list, appears a strong candidate, but it was never registered, although adjacent land at Drumpellier, not on this list, did become a country park later. Rozelle, a 39ha park recently gifted to Ayr Burgh, received CCS funding in 1969 together with an assurance that it was very suited to be a country park; but the park was curiously ruled out in a review which

¹⁶ Edinburgh: National Records of Scotland: Countryside Commission for Scotland archive: CCS3/35: papers for meeting 12 February 1990.

¹⁷ Edinburgh: National Records of Scotland: Countryside Commission for Scotland archive: CCS6/2, Report to Management and Projects Committee, 27 May 1969.

took place in 1972, because of its urban location.¹⁸ That review also identified no fewer than 75 sites that had sought consideration as country parks; just 18 of these were ultimately successful.¹⁹

Although CCS was inconsistent in recording reasons for non-registration, they did identify several issues within applicant authorities that influenced their assessment. These included an inability to fund the applicant's share of the costs (even though applicants' liability was limited to 25% of the total eligible spend), a lack of staff capable of progressing schemes, a reluctance to use external consultants to provide expertise that was lacking in-house, and problems over land acquisition.²⁰ Scottish authorities were not alone with these issues: their Welsh counterparts were similarly under-resourced to take full advantage of the provision before they were re-organised in 1974.²¹ The small size and limited capacity of Scottish councils before re-organisation was clearly a factor inhibiting their ability to develop suitable schemes, but this was exacerbated by a lack of clarity from CCS that increased the perceived risk; it was therefore disingenuous of CCS to see the problem only in terms of local authority capacity and confidence.

There was also a second crucial element in play here. Scottish local authorities were aware that countryside funding was not dependent on designation, and councils could therefore secure the funding they sought without the need to draw up a country park

¹⁸ Edinburgh: National Records of Scotland: Countryside Commission for Scotland archive: CCS 6/1: Papers for meeting of Management and Projects committee, 7 May 1969; CCS6/5: Report to Management and Projects Committee, 26 July 1972.

¹⁹ Edinburgh: National Records of Scotland: Countryside Commission for Scotland archive: CCS6/5: Report to Management and Projects Committee, 26 July 1972.

²⁰ Edinburgh: National Records of Scotland: Countryside Commission for Scotland archive: CCS3/2, Draft Annual Report for 1969, submitted to meeting 11 March 1970.

²¹ F. P. Tindall, article in *The Scotsman*, 10 April 1967.

proposal, and without any post-designation obligation to maintain standards. The Association of County Councils in Scotland had already intimated their opposition to the idea of giving CCS any role in supervising local authority recreation space, and the availability of funding with no strings attached must have been attractive.²² In contrast, in England and Wales designation was a prerequisite to funding, and the evidence suggests that this was a major factor in the faster development of country parks there.²³



Figure 8.2: Loirston Loch, Aberdeen (Author's collection)

Loirston

Nonetheless, some authorities saw merit in designation, and applications continued to flow. A significant proposal was an application from Aberdeen City Council for the

²² Edinburgh: National Records of Scotland: Association of County Councils in Scotland archive CO1/5/954: notes on meeting with Minister of State, 18 February 1966.

²³ Edinburgh: National Records of Scotland: Countryside Commission for Scotland archive: CCS3/2: Evidence to Select Committee on Scottish Affairs, papers for meeting 8 March 1972.

city's first country park, to be sited at Loirston, south of the city and close to a large urban housing estate. Loirston was earmarked in 1971, when the City Council published a booklet on 'Loirston Country Park', and was referenced in CCS' Annual Report for 1972 as having been provisionally approved, a status it retained for several years during which little real progress occurred.²⁴ CCS certainly welcomed the project, approving a grant for land acquisition, making grants in 1973 and 1975 to accommodate revisions to the original plan, and allocating further funding in 1982 to support provision of a visitor centre.²⁵ William Taylor, a planning officer with the Council around this time, recorded that '[CCS] have obviously given every support possible for the setting up of this park.'²⁶ CCS reported early in 1975 that proposals at Loirston had been 'consolidated' and were at an advanced stage of planning.²⁷ However, by 1977 there was still no significant progress, and even though the park was included in the 1978 Structure Plan for the area, continuing delays were attributed to access issues and to the continuing need to use part of the site for landfill, both matters that could have been resolved much earlier.²⁸

Taylor's view, as an insider, was that the main factor holding progress back was financial, and down to a combination of government spending cuts and CCS' over-commitment at Strathclyde.²⁹ However, the council's hesitancy can perhaps also be

²⁴ Edinburgh: National Records of Scotland: Countryside Commission for Scotland archive: CCS 3/3: Papers for meeting 9 January 1973.

²⁵ William Taylor, 'Country Park Provision', p. 44; Edinburgh: National Records of Scotland: Countryside Commission for Scotland archive: CCS 3/17: Internal Review of Country Parks, presented to meeting 9 September 1980; papers for meeting 9 December 1980.

²⁶ Taylor, 'Country Park Provision', p. 46.

²⁷ Edinburgh: National Records of Scotland: Countryside Commission for Scotland archive: CCS3/7: Papers for meeting 11 February 1975.

²⁸ Taylor, 'Country Park Provision', p. 46; Edinburgh: National Records of Scotland: CCS archive: CCS 3/7: papers for meeting 14 March 1978.

²⁹ Taylor, 'Country Park Provision', p. 46.

attributed to uncertainty over future land use; whilst on one hand the park possibility offered a buffer zone at a time of southward expansion of Aberdeen in the early 1970s, a Green Belt review as early as 1973 had identified Loirston as a possible development area for housing and industry.³⁰ CCS eventually turned down yet another funding application in 1988, drawing attention to the fact that land it had helped acquire for recreation was still being rented out for agricultural use, while the waste disposal site at Loirston was also still operational; it described progress as ‘very disappointing’, and expressed its lack of confidence that this would change.³¹ Uncertainty continued to characterise the site; it was formally identified as a country park by SNH in the 1990s, but has since lost that status and is now simply a ‘recreation area’, with very little infrastructure.³² But it has also, since 2012, been identified as a site for major new development, and its future as an open space remains in doubt.³³

Later applications and issues

There was also an evident reluctance in some instances to apply country park policy to the resolution of visitor problems. Although CCS was always anxious to avoid the embarrassment of a paucity of applications, it also seemed quite equivocal about entertaining schemes that might actually have proved feasible. An interesting illustration of this comes from Sandyhills in Kirkcudbrightshire, a popular visitor destination consisting of a sandy beach and dunes on the Solway Firth. By 1975, the

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 36.

³¹ Edinburgh: National Records of Scotland: Countryside Commission for Scotland archive: CCS3/31: papers for meeting 12 April 1988.

³² Site visit, Easter 2015.

³³ Optimised Environments Ltd., ‘Loirston Development Framework’ (Unpublished report, Edinburgh, 2012).

site was experiencing serious erosion, through vehicle and people movement, children playing in the dunes, and the erection of beach huts, and the council sought CCS' assistance to remove the huts, improve access, and carry out restorative works on the dunes. These were exactly the kind of problems that country parks had been intended to confront, but although CCS found itself able to support the council financially in this work, it did not go on to suggest a country park solution in an area that had no existing provision of this nature.³⁴ Similarly, no country park proposal ever emerged to confront visitor pressures in Glencoe or Glen Nevis, where proposals focussed on visitor management and facilities, rather than on alternative provision or distraction.³⁵ At Dechmont, near Livingston, a 1985 proposal to develop a 100ha site to provide for jogging, orienteering and Nordic skiing in a rural setting – a plan that looked very much like a country park – was not encouraged to seek designation.³⁶ Proximity may have been an issue here – the site is close to two other West Lothian parks – but CCS was capable of greater flexibility in its application of the rules by this time, and its attitude seems strangely inconsistent.

³⁴ Edinburgh: National Records of Scotland: Countryside Commission for Scotland archive: CCS 3/7: papers for meeting 8 July 1975.

³⁵ Edinburgh: National Records of Scotland: Countryside Commission for Scotland archive: CCS 3/8: papers for meeting 9 September 1975.

³⁶ Edinburgh: National Records of Scotland: Countryside Commission for Scotland archive: CCS 3/26: papers for meeting 10 September 1985



Figure 8.3: Sandyhills Bay, Solway Firth (Peter Webb, used with permission)

Local government reorganisation was also a factor affecting country park proposals. Some schemes benefited from new professional management and increased resources, but others found their foundations shifting. Coves, near Greenock, is one of these; it was outlined as a possible country park by Greenock Burgh prior to 1975, but after reorganisation its new owners, Inverclyde DC, decided to build an indoor facility instead.³⁷ The country park possibility resurfaced in 1979 in a new proposition merging Coves with neighbouring land in Greenock; it emerged that although Coves was in designated countryside, the adjacent land was not.³⁸ This apparently made further progress impossible; but the same problem was easily surmounted at

³⁷ Thornton, 'Policy-Making', p. 191.

³⁸ Edinburgh: National Records of Scotland: Countryside Commission for Scotland archive: CCS 3/15: papers for meeting 12 June 1979; Internal Review of Country Parks, presented to meeting 9 September 1980.

Calderglen, near East Kilbride, the following year, when the boundary of the defined countryside was moved to make a new park possible.³⁹

Several other long-lived local authority schemes that never fulfilled their original intentions can be traced through CCS' lifetime. One was Lanark Loch, first mooted in 1969, which resurfaced in 1978, and secured CCS funding for a feasibility study aiming towards designation as a country park.⁴⁰ A positive report led Clydesdale DC to agree to seek registration, but it never followed through; Thornton suggested this was due to geographical jealousies among councillors, inhibiting officers from progressing funding bids.⁴¹ Cochno, a large site acquired by Clydebank DC for recreation in the 1960s, was put forward for consideration in 1971, dismissed in the 1972 review due to landscape quality issues, and finally had a country park feasibility study carried out in 1983, but was another site where uncertainty over land use priorities was problematic.⁴² An unattractive site popular with local people, it was extensively polluted by landfill before the council eventually decided in 1991, unsuccessfully, to seek future country park designation.⁴³ Colzium, near Kilsyth, an eminently suitable site with heritage and natural environment attributes, was put forward in 1971, but was not proceeded with.⁴⁴ Nevertheless, the proposition was still alive in 1978 when CCS encouraged preparation of a management plan as a basis for provisional

³⁹ Edinburgh: National Records of Scotland: Countryside Commission for Scotland archive: CCS 3/17: papers for meeting 13 May 1980.

⁴⁰ Edinburgh: National Records of Scotland: Countryside Commission for Scotland archive: CCS 3/14: papers for meeting 14 November 1978.

⁴¹ Edinburgh: National Records of Scotland: Countryside Commission for Scotland archive: CCS3/17: papers for meeting 14 October 1980. Thornton, 'Policy-Making', p. 199.

⁴² Edinburgh: National Records of Scotland: Countryside Commission for Scotland archive: CCS 6/4: Papers for Management and Projects Committee, 28 July 1971; CCS6/5: Report to Management and Projects Committee, 26 July 1972.

⁴³ Edinburgh: National Records of Scotland: Countryside Commission for Scotland archive: CCS 3/38: papers for meeting 10 September 1991; CCS6/4: Papers for Management and Projects Committee, 24 November 1971; Thornton, 'Policy-Making', p. 28.

⁴⁴ Thornton, 'Policy-Making', p. 66.

designation.⁴⁵ It too resurfaced as a continuing possibility in 1980, when CCS conducted a review of existing and potential country parks, but again failed to materialise.⁴⁶

A further interesting example is that of Rouken Glen, a large park in south Glasgow, first proposed by Arthur Oldham, Parks Manager for Glasgow City Council, as a country park outside the city's boundaries but to be funded partly by the city; an arrangement entirely in keeping with, and provided for in, the legislation.⁴⁷ Rouken Glen was dismissed by CCS in 1969 as excessively urban in character (a curious view of the site), and again in the 1972 review, but CCS changed its position ten years later and welcomed it as offering opportunities 'of exactly the kind the Countryside (Scotland) Act seeks to provide'. It was proposed as a country park, but the local planning authority post-reorganisation, Eastwood DC – after indicating that designation would be both 'appropriate and desirable' – never pursued this further.⁴⁸

Meanwhile, a number of estate owners in Scotland were making their homes and gardens open to the public, and a few of these went further and created privately-owned and managed countryside attractions for which they charged admission. Private ownership was not in itself a bar to Countryside (Scotland) Act funding, and CCS funded improvements at Finlaystone (Port Glasgow), Dalkeith (Midlothian), Hopetoun (South Queensferry) and Kelburn (Largs), all of which would in public

⁴⁵ Edinburgh: National Records of Scotland: Countryside Commission for Scotland archive: CCS 3/13: papers for meeting 9 May 1978.

⁴⁶ Edinburgh: National Records of Scotland: Countryside Commission for Scotland Archive: CCS 3/17: Internal Review of Country Parks, presented to meeting 9 September 1980.

⁴⁷ Edinburgh: National Records of Scotland: Scottish Development Department Archive DD12/3456: Minutes of meeting with SDD, CCS, Glasgow City Council, 8 October 1969.

⁴⁸ Edinburgh: National Records of Scotland: Countryside Commission for Scotland archive: CCS3/23: papers for meeting 13 December 1983; CCS6/5: Report to Management and Projects Committee, 26 July 1972.

ownership have been obvious candidates for designation as country parks.⁴⁹ Indeed, CCS themselves described estates like these as ‘country park equivalents’ when reviewing public provision in 1990.⁵⁰ However, CCS never allowed privately-owned estates to be designated as country parks, interpreting the legislation as precluding this, in contrast to the view in England & Wales. After CCS’ demise, some of these estates – Dalkeith, for example – adopted the ‘country park’ label with impunity.

Interestingly, this private sector involvement in countryside recreation dates largely from the 1970s, rather than from the Thatcher years when private provision was being most vigorously embraced. Finlaystone opened to the public in 1975, and Kelburn in 1977, while Hopetoun had established a charitable trust to operate its visitor programme as early as 1974.⁵¹ These three sites (though not Dalkeith) thus belong to a group of independently-operated countryside sites that also include the Blair Drummond Safari Park, opened in 1970, and the Highland Wildlife Park near Kingussie, which opened two years later.⁵² Commodification of the countryside was not, at least in Scotland, a uniquely Thatcherite phenomenon.

⁴⁹ Edinburgh: National Records of Scotland: Countryside Commission for Scotland archive: CCS 3/31: papers for meeting 8 March 1988; E.J. Hutton, *Bathgate Hills Country Park* (Linlithgow: West Lothian County Council, 1968), p. 1.

⁵⁰ Edinburgh: National Records of Scotland: Countryside Commission for Scotland archive: CCS 3/35: papers for meeting 13 March 1990.

⁵¹ ‘Finlaystone Country Estate’: <http://www.finlaystone.co.uk/finlaystone-house/the-macmillans/> [Accessed 14 September 2018]; ‘Kelburn Castle and Estate’: https://www.kelburnestate.com/castle_and_estate/history [Accessed 14 September 2018]; ‘Hopetoun: A Lasting Impression’: <http://hopetoun.co.uk/about/the-trust/> [Accessed 14 September 2018].

⁵² ‘Blair Drummond Safari Park’, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Blair_Drummond_Safari_Park [Accessed 14 September 2018]; ‘Highland Wildlife Park’, Undiscovered Scotland, <https://www.undiscoveredscotland.co.uk/kinncraig/highlandwildlifepark/index.html> [Accessed 14 September 2018]. The park is owned by the Royal Scottish Zoological Society, a charitable body.

Conclusion

The experience of applicants shows three possible outcomes: a successful application that led to both funding and designation, a successful application that achieved funding but did not secure designation, and an application that was rejected. This chapter has focussed particularly on the second and third of these, and identifies nine different reasons for a site not becoming a country park; a more detailed analysis of other unsuccessful schemes would probably produce more, as might an analysis of factors affecting non-registration in England and Wales. Factors behind failure include unsuitable size (both excessively large and excessively small); proximity to other sites, especially Strathclyde; funding problems; an 'urban' location; the capacity or willingness of the local authority to develop an application; conflicts within local authorities over land-use priorities; and a reluctance to designate privately-owned sites. Factors also include a failure on the part of CCS to suggest country park status, and the absence of any designation requirement as a prerequisite to funding. However, not all the reasons identified here are completely convincing, especially in the light of subsequent events and the evolution of policy over time.

One factor that was never constant was CCS' own eligibility policy. The rejection of Bathgate Hills clarified that a country park would not take on the nature of a national park, covering a large land area and in multiple ownership, but did not define what it should be like, and did not prevent two similar unsuccessful applications. A tentative enquiry about a site at Tyndrum was declined because of the small acreage involved, but this criterion did not disqualify a later successful application from the very small

site at Clatto.⁵³ Criteria evolved and changed, but their applicability was generally quite arbitrary and could be modified, either formally or informally, to accommodate more difficult applications when deemed necessary. Brodick is the outstanding example of this practice.

Culzean's approval in 1969 demonstrated the possibilities of the country estate as a country park, but although former country estates feature prominently in the portfolio of Scottish country parks, by no means all such applicants were successful. Culzean illustrates an ambivalent attitude on the part of CCS to location; country parks were expected to be close to population centres, but Culzean could never be described as meeting this criterion, and over time the requirement was relaxed to the point where CCS approved a country park located on an island. Privately-owned estates were considered in principle unsuitable for designation, but were nevertheless funded – and this consideration did not apply when the private owners were the NTS, whose two applications were both approved.

CCS were also equivocal about peri-urban locations: Rozelle had been turned down on the grounds that it was urban in location, but Forfar Loch, a similar mix of urban and rural elements, was registered in 1980, and in the same year CCS found itself able to move the boundaries of the countryside to accommodate Calderglen, something it had been unable to entertain at Coves a year earlier.⁵⁴ Rouken Glen was first treated as ineligible, then as a site of exactly the right kind and to be welcomed into the fold. The Sandyhills and Dechmont examples also highlight inconsistent

⁵³ Edinburgh: National Records of Scotland: Countryside Commission for Scotland archive: CCS(M) (71)12: Papers for Management and Projects Committee 24 March 1971; CCS 3/22: papers for meeting 10 May 1983.

⁵⁴ Edinburgh: National Records of Scotland: Countryside Commission for Scotland archive: CCS 3/17: papers for meeting 13 May 1980.

interpretation of the policy, with CCS apparently failing to consider the possibility of a country park solution where its application seemed both sensible and feasible.

CCS frequently asserted the need for a strategic approach to country park locations, so as to complement rather than compete with existing countryside provision, and to ensure an even spread of resources. However, it lacked the power to make its own selection of sites, and could only take a reactive approach to the proposals it received; the reluctance of applicants to develop schemes inevitably resulted in embarrassingly slow progress. Addressing this in 1972, CCS actively reconsidered schemes it had previously rejected, including both Dalziel and Allanton, originally declined because of their proximity to Strathclyde.⁵⁵ CCS policy on proximity wavered over the years, with the argument deployed against Chatelherault, which shared its catchment area with Strathclyde, but overlooked in relation to West Lothian's plethora of sites.

Strathclyde's impact was not only geographical, of course; the project was also understood as a massive drain on available resources, in spite of SDD assurances that this would not be the case. There is no question that Strathclyde over-ran its budget, but the impact of this on countryside projects more generally is less certain. Much of the budget at Strathclyde was for reclamation and decontamination, and the budget over-run came about largely through contingency expenditure when this became more complex than expected.⁵⁶ But the finance for the remedial work came largely from the Industrial Development Act 1963, whereas countryside funding was used only to improve the site after rehabilitation. Campbell assesses CCS'

⁵⁵ Edinburgh: National Records of Scotland: Countryside Commission for Scotland archive: CCS 3/13: papers for meeting 12 September 1978.

⁵⁶ The complex financing of the Strathclyde project, and its cost overrun, are discussed in Thornton, *The Politics of Strathclyde Country Park*, pp. 25-34.

contribution to Strathclyde at around £117,000, a significant sum but very much less than the agency contributed at Culzean (£2.1 million), Aden (£1.5 million) or Eglinton (£1.5 million), suggesting that the financial pressures were not in fact as great as CCS claimed.⁵⁷ There was undoubtedly significant pressure on the SDD budget as a result of Strathclyde, but the impact on CCS was less direct, and Strathclyde looks to have been used as a convenient, rather than a convincing, excuse for the failure to land schemes such as Roslin Glen.

CCS identified local authorities' own limitations as a factor in their slow progress in registering country parks. Many Scottish local authorities were small and unequipped to assign staff and resources to the development of new park provision, even with the considerable attraction of 75% grant funding; this no doubt was an inhibition prior to local government reorganisation in 1975. Parochial attitudes, and a reluctance to see beyond the needs of their own ratepayers, were also factors. But this does not apply across the board; three Ayrshire authorities were able to combine to enable Culzean, whilst three Lanarkshire authorities collaborated at Strathclyde. East Lothian's senior planning officer was Frank Tindall, a leading figure in Scottish countryside policy in the early years of CCS, but it was not until 1976 that East Lothian put forward a proposal for a country park; this delay was not due to lack of capacity. Other authorities showed reluctance to take up the opportunity; Aberdeen's indecisiveness over Loirston was not unique. Cochno was delayed, and then withdrawn, because Clydebank could not countenance the loss of its landfill site, while Coves missed out when Inverclyde made a stronger case for an indoor facility. Perthshire's failure to propose any country park

⁵⁷ Campbell, 'The Wood Not the Trees', Appendix A: all figures adjusted to 1996 equivalents.

is consistent with its general hesitancy to engage with tourism.⁵⁸ Reluctance to participate was not uniquely an issue of local authority capacity or resource, as CCS seemed to believe, but was also an outcome of local priorities.

Yet even those authorities interested in provision demonstrated a reluctance to seek formal designation for their sites. This was partly because they had no need to do so; Eastwood happily accepted funding and then decided not to bother with designation. However, councils were also conscious of the threat they believed designation represented to their sovereignty: 'A local authority that is forward-looking enough to establish a country park ought to be trusted to maintain the country park, and it seems unnecessary that the display of a standard symbol should subject the local authority to a requirement that the management standards of the country park will require to be maintained to the Commission's satisfaction.'⁵⁹ This was posturing, and as it turned out, unnecessary; CCS showed little interest in monitoring country parks after designation. England's experience of more rapid designation suggests that the prerequisite of registration as a condition of funding was the critical issue, although this would never have been feasible in Scotland's much smaller and under-resourced local authorities.

CCS evidently felt itself to have been constrained by issues outside its control, such as local authority capacity, indecision within authorities over land use priorities, constraints on funding and the priority afforded by SDD to Strathclyde. This chapter provides evidence to support this position. But CCS' effectiveness in delivering country parks was also constrained by its own policy decisions, including the absence

⁵⁸ Edinburgh: National Records of Scotland: Scottish Development Department archive: SDD Circular 15/1964.

⁵⁹ Edinburgh: National Records of Scotland: Countryside Commission for Scotland archive: CCS6/1: Letter, F. Inglis (ACCS) to CCS, 30 July 1969, in papers for Management and Projects Committee, 1 September 1969.

of any formal link between funding and designation, and its attitude towards privately-owned sites. Above all, the story of the ‘country parks that never were’ illustrates dramatically CCS’ inconsistency in developing and applying its own criteria for eligibility. Chapter 5 showed how sites that stretched the rules were allowed through, and how the rules were manipulated to enable this; this chapter has shown how an apparently arbitrary application of those same rules disqualified some sites – and, in all probability, discouraged others from applying.

Jamie Stormonth Darling summarised the Chatelherault controversy in terms of ‘personalities, pounds and politics’.⁶⁰ In each of the projects at Culzean, Aden and Lochore Meadows, there was a dominant and persuasive enthusiast for the project, bringing together the resources and political will to make the project happen. At Chatelherault, and in the country parks that never were, one or more of these elements was often missing. There were no significant personalities advocating their project, or lobbying the informal network, and their consistent absence from this chapter is telling. Pounds certainly came into play, with some schemes failing through lack of resource, or at least being blamed on this, and with some smaller authorities unable to find their proportion of the funding. Politics, however, played a large part, with smaller authorities refusing to accommodate the needs of non-ratepayers, even with the bait of a 75% contribution. The internal politics of local authorities sometimes left leisure departments unable to assert their priorities over those of other land uses such as waste disposal or economic development, or emphasised recreational priorities other than in the countryside. This chapter provides evidence to support Stormonth Darling,

⁶⁰ Edinburgh: National Records of Scotland: Scottish Development Department Archive: Ancient Monuments Branch archive DD27/4168: Letter from J Stormonth Darling to Marquess of Bute, 24 April 1972.

but also emphasises the primacy of political groundwork, and the value of a high-energy visionary advocate in bringing a scheme to fruition.

Chapter 9: Discussion: The Scottish contribution to an appraisal of country park policy

‘There is no single “rural Britain”’

Paul Cloke, 1992¹

‘Geography was one of the grounds of difference’

Nigel Thrift, 1992²

Introduction

Earlier chapters have already identified several conclusions drawn from the evidence that they have presented. This chapter will attempt to stand further back from the narrative and examine the bigger picture, reviewing the areas of scholarly debate raised earlier. It should be noted that the thesis has not tested the applicability and soundness of these academic positions to the English context from which most were derived, but rather seeks to make a Scottish contribution to the discussion.

Six broad areas of scholarly contention were identified in the introduction: the impact of the country park policy on the issues it was hoped to address; the possible commodification of the landscape through the use of designation and branding; the applicability of phasing within an overall continuum of Scottish country park policy; the location of Scottish sites within an overall strategy; social inclusion and exclusion; and the values and understanding of the countryside that were embodied in country

¹ Cloke, ‘The Countryside’, p. 269.

² Nigel Thrift, ‘Light out of Darkness: Critical Social Theory in 1980s Britain’ in P. Cloke (ed.) *Policy and Change in Thatcher’s Britain*, pp. 1-32 (p. 25)

park policy. Each of these will now be reconsidered in the light of the evidence from Scotland; some further observations on important themes relating to country parks will then follow.

Areas of academic debate

Success and impact

Were the parks as successful as some academics have claimed, or were other scholars correct to describe their impact as more limited? As the introduction hinted, this question begs a further one: how is success to be defined? Should it be measured simply in terms of visitor numbers, indicating whether a policy designed to attract people into spaces devoted to recreation was effective in that respect? Or should it take a broader view, and look at the extent to which country parks secured the outcome originally intended, reducing excessive levels of visiting in vulnerable countryside? Might more complex metrics, such as penetration of supposed catchment, or perceived value for money, be more realistic measures? There may also be an argument for measuring impact on land use in Scotland as a result of the policy, or for quantifying the parks' contribution to tourism and economic development. All of these measures, alone or in combination, might be useful.

Unfortunately, CCS offers little help here: it looked no further than the number of parks in existence. For example, in its Annual Report for 1976, CCS advised that it had added three parks to its portfolio, provisionally registered two others, and considered additional applications; only the number of parks was mentioned, not their significance

or the contribution they were expected to make.³ Towards the end of CCS' existence, politics student Stella Thornton challenged Russell Turner, CCS' Assistant Director, on how the policy was assessed, eliciting the response that 'in the sense of a formal review [of country parks] ...there has been no such evaluation in Scotland'. Turner cited the number of parks created, reinforcing this as the essential yardstick used by CCS.⁴ And really there was very little additional data on which an appraisal could be based. Even the performance measure suggested in CCS' Arthur Young report of 1987 – 'estimated use of country parks' – was simplistic and poorly defined, with no guidance as to what 'use' meant or what type of 'estimate' would suffice.⁵ Campbell noted in 1996 that 'country parks collect less management information than many other publicly-funded leisure facilities...few take market research and visitor surveys seriously.'⁶ One conference speaker admitted in 1984 that the (Scottish) park he represented had not undertaken a single visitor survey in the ten years it had then been open.⁷ This issue had been raised as early as 1976: 'in the recreation sector, information about...consumer preferences seem[s] to be particularly difficult to obtain.'⁸ It was raised again in 1983, when Susan Walker and Brian Duffield drew attention to the lack of any consistent basis for assessing the impact of open spaces, or their value for money.⁹ But CCS only gave monitoring serious consideration towards the end of its life, with the belated realisation in 1990 that 'in a climate of

³ Countryside Commission for Scotland: *Ninth Report* (Perth: CCS, 1976), pp. 16–17. 'Provisional Registration' was a generally meaningless device used by CCS to demonstrate progress when little had been made.

⁴ Thornton, 'Policy-Making', p. 213.

⁵ Arthur Young, *CCS Strategy and Programme*, p. 17.

⁶ Campbell, 'The Wood not the Trees', p. 10.

⁷ Edinburgh: National Trust for Scotland Archive: 01/0041/32/02: 'Country Parks are for People'; Conference Report from event at Craigie College, Ayr, April 1984. The park in question was Palacerigg.

⁸ Stoakes, 'Economic Aspects', p. 17.

⁹ Walker and Duffield, 'Urban Parks and Open Spaces', pp. 7, 9.

scarce resources, vague estimates carry less weight than facts.’¹⁰ Nor was there any follow-up on management plans; once the funding was approved, the plans were entirely left to the site owners to use or ignore as they saw fit. And value for money – a basic measurement in any statutory funding initiative since at least the 1990s – was first appraised in 1997, five years after CCS’ demise.

Aside from numbers of parks, the only metric used in CCS’ lifetime was visitor numbers, which (other than at the NTS sites) were collected erratically, on an *ad hoc* basis, and with no standardised methodology, making comparison over time and between sites problematic. Quantification of visitor numbers and characteristics for open spaces is notoriously difficult, but CCS never attempted any guidance on data gathering, and allowed parks to develop their own independent measurement frameworks. In 1990, when CCS attempted a systematic review of visitor data, it was noted that nine of the 35 parks then in existence used traffic counters, while six had footfall counters in place – so totally different measurement bases were being employed.¹¹ The other parks were presumably using less sophisticated bases for measurement.

The appendix includes an analysis of the 1990 data; it is of dubious quality, to say the least, but is reasonable to conclude that some Scottish parks had a very much greater appeal than others, and that visitor numbers alone, while undoubtedly impressive in some cases, do not universally portray success. Nine parks claimed visitor levels around or above 1,000 users per day in 1990, but these are only a

¹⁰ Edinburgh: National Records of Scotland: Countryside Commission for Scotland Archive CCS3/36: Papers for meeting 9 October 1990.

¹¹ Edinburgh: National Records of Scotland: Countryside Commission for Scotland Archive CCS3/36: Papers for meeting 9 October 1990.

quarter of the sites, and others had sparser take-up. Gartmorn Dam and Haughton House, both somewhat unprepossessing sites, claimed less than 50 people per day in 1990, while ten further parks claimed fewer than 300 visitors a day.¹² Admittedly, more reliable data would help, but it appears difficult to support a claim of uniform success across the whole portfolio based on this measure alone.

The appendix also uses the visitor data to analyse catchment penetration of its urban surroundings, which might (subject to the quality of the visitor numbers) reveal the extent to which a park attracted its target audience.¹³ Strathclyde emerges as by far the most successful on this measure, attracting an audience of over four times its notional catchment population, while Camperdown and Culzean also outperform their catchment, but to a lesser degree. But overall, only ten of the 33 parks managed a penetration greater than 50% of their catchment population, while twelve achieved less than 10%. Again, any notion of success must be qualified.

What, then, would be a reasonable basis on which to measure the 'success' of open space provision in any future policy initiative? It would need to take account of the original intention of the policy and the outcomes expected from it, employ a consistent and tightly-defined means of collecting relevant data in sufficient volume to allow segmentation, be responsive to change, reflect the costs associated with the policy, and be monitored on a consistent and recurring basis. It might well combine several performance measurements, enable an appraisal of relative strengths and weaknesses in implementation, and require the responsible body to accept a degree

¹² To further illustrate the difficulties of relying on visitor numbers, Haughton House was claimed in 1984 to be entertaining 250,000 visitors per annum. (CCS3/24, papers for meeting 11 September 1984): one wonders what they found to do there in such quantities, and why the numbers fell away so dramatically – unless of course the figures were incorrect.

¹³ The basis for this calculation is provided in the appendix.

of accountability for its work. This type of approach, however, was well outside the thinking both of CCS and the SDD.



Figure 9.1: Haughton House Country Park, Aberdeenshire (Author's collection)

The impact on tourism and economic development is even more difficult to quantify, although parks' feasibility studies often made improbable claims in this respect. Some parks aspired to be significant visitor attractions, but most aimed at a purely local audience and were not on any tourist map, either literally or figuratively. CCS produced occasional booklets promoting Scotland's countryside, and country parks were sometimes identified in these, but usually this was alongside other, often more scenic opportunities that (paradoxically) country parks had been intended to draw people away from.¹⁴ Reclamation parks undoubtedly played a part in addressing issues of dereliction, making areas more attractive, encouraging investment, and

¹⁴ For instance, in *Seeing Scotland* (Perth: Countryside Commission for Scotland, 1969), and in *Scotland's Countryside* (Perth: Countryside Commission for Scotland, 1972). Interestingly, illustrations in these booklets emphasise the beauty of the scenic sites, and do not feature country parks with any prominence.

perhaps improving local property values.¹⁵ But many other sites were already green recreational space, or locally focussed, and others were remote from residential property or tourism infrastructure, so their economic impact would always be limited.

As far as land cover was concerned, the impact can only be described as marginal. Overall, 6,481 ha of Scotland became country park, less than 0.1% of Scotland's designated countryside. Moreover, two-thirds of this land was already public open space, while the balance included the 400 ha Strathclyde Country Park, which would have been developed for recreation regardless of the Countryside (Scotland) Act.¹⁶ Although an SNH analysis showed a doubling of recreational land in Scotland between the 1940s and 1970s, and a further increase of 15% in provision up to the 1980s, these increases took place against a low base. The actual area of land specifically designated for recreation rose from just 70 km² in the 1940s to 145 km² in the 1970s and 168 km² in the 1980s, and much of this change was golf course development, no doubt valuable but with limited impact on general provision.¹⁷ Genuinely new free-to-access recreational land generated through the country park policy totalled around 25 km², hardly a transformational impact.

The overall impact on patterns of recreation is more difficult to quantify, because of the absence of any empirical baseline against which to measure, the influence of unquantifiable external change factors such as fuel prices and lifestyle decisions, and above all the inconsistency with which participation was measured. Visitor surveys during CCS' lifetime raise questions about the effectiveness of country parks as part

¹⁵ RICS survey, 2007, cited by Ciria Open Space, <http://www.opengreenspace.com/opportunities-and-challenges/economic/property-values/> [accessed 8 November 2017].

¹⁶ Source: data collated from appendix.

¹⁷ Scottish Natural Heritage, *Land Cover Change in Scotland: National Countryside Monitoring Scheme Results for the 1970s and 1980s (Advisory Note 75)* (Perth: SNH, 1997), pp. 4–6, 29, 70.

of the recreation supply chain, but even more so about methodology and sampling. Taking the documents at face value, however, a 1981 study suggested that just 7% of Scottish countryside visitors had made a country park their main stopping place on a countryside trip. Twelve years after legislation, therefore, country parks were having only limited impact on overall levels of countryside visiting and were not especially effective in drawing visitors away from other sites.¹⁸ (English results were similar, with an overall 8% of total trips having a main stop at a country park.)¹⁹

A further Scottish study, published in 1985, also found relatively little take-up of country parks as visitor destinations, with just two in the top thirty countryside destinations cited by respondents.²⁰ Several of Dower's statistical forecasts – higher car ownership, higher disposable incomes, increased free time – had come true, at least in direction if not in degree; but these had not resulted in the predicted flood of demand for countryside recreation, which was largely being met by pre-existing supply.²¹ Nigel Curry and Katrina Brown's Scottish analysis of 2010 found that participation had in fact been in decline since at least 1985, largely as a result of lifestyle change.²² Such evidence as there is, therefore, confirms both over-provision in Scotland, and comparative ineffectiveness in relation to other countryside attractions.

Both sides in the scholarly debate thus have data to support their position, although the Scottish evidence lacks precision, flawed by inadequate attention to methodology.

¹⁸ Susan Mackenzie, *Leisure and the Countryside in Scotland* (Perth: CCS, 1981), p. 10, 15. English results were similar, with an overall 8% of total trips having a main stop at a country park (Countryside Commission, *Trends in Tourism and Recreation 1968-78* (Cheltenham: Countryside Commission, 1980), p. 17.) By 2003, this had reduced to 6% (Collins, 'Looking for a Renaissance', p. 252).

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²⁰ CCS, *Patterns of Countryside Recreation Trips (SLS Report No. 4)* (Perth: CCS, 1985), p. 48.

²¹ J.T. Coppock *et al*, *Changes in Outdoor Recreation 1973-1981 (SLS Report No. 2)* (Perth: CCS, 1985), pp. 49, 52.

²² Nigel Curry and Katrina Brown, 'Differentiating Outdoor Recreation Evidence Drawn from National Surveys in Scotland', *J. of Policy Research in Tourism, Leisure and Events*, 2.1 (2010), 29–50 (pp. 29, 31).

Elson's study indicates similar difficulties with English data, despite efforts to promote higher standards of visitor research in England & Wales.²³ Some facts emerge as incontestable, nevertheless: some Scottish parks were hugely successful as recreation venues, attracting large and enthusiastic levels of visiting, but the overall impact of this policy directly on provision for recreation was mixed, with some parks only moderately successful, and some apparently superfluous to requirements. The quality-based approach, although more subjective, yields similarly variable results; some Scottish country parks are incontestably of high quality, but many are less than exceptional, and there are some that perpetuate Shoard's complaint of aesthetic poverty.²⁴ In Scotland at least, notions of success, while not entirely dismissible, must be heavily qualified.

Commodification

The Scottish portfolio has a contribution to make to the discussion of commodification and standardisation in the outcome of country park policy. Ostensibly, there was a standard product of sorts on offer: the parks were all intended to meet a demand for outdoor recreation, especially from motorists, and they notionally targeted a common audience. But in reality, other agendas became dominant, as the case studies illustrate. Culzean became a country park principally to enable the NTS to focus finance on its heritage asset; Lochore Meadows was developed essentially to meet quality of life objectives and to restore a derelict landscape; Aden always had a prominent heritage dimension; and Chatelherault became a country park as a means of saving its centrepiece from destruction. For these sites, and for others as well,

²³ Elson, *Review and Evaluation*, p. 18.

²⁴ Shoard, 'Recreation: The Key to Survival', p. 63.

country park funding was a means to a wider end. In this sense at least, Glyptis' perceptions of opportunism are justifiable; the availability of funding encouraged applicants to position their projects to improve eligibility, even when this was far from the whole picture, and sluggish take-up encouraged CCS to accept these projects as country parks.²⁵



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Figure 9.2: 'Weel Vrocht Grun' exhibition, Aden Country Park (Author's collection)

The appendix data reveals the extent of standardisation across the 36 country parks. Almost all were located in the countryside, and most offered at least a minimum range of visitor facilities in the form of car parking, toilets, rangers and litter disposal.²⁶ To this extent, they were a package with predictable contents. But they demonstrated considerable variation in size, landscape type, relief, accessibility and activities supported. Some sites were highly specialised, offering essentially a single type of active recreation, while others were more generalist with a variety of activities provided

²⁵ Glyptis, *Countryside Recreation*, p. 89.

²⁶ There were exceptions even to these minima. For example, Pollok is by no stretch a rural site, and Forfar Loch never had a ranger service.

for; some were designed to provide aesthetic pleasure or educational opportunity while others were purely functional in nature. Some were largely unspoiled (or unimproved) countryside, while others were highly planned landscapes with features more usually seen in urban contexts. This suggests limits to the extent of commodification conveyed by the brand.

Designation ought to offer some help here, but does not. In Scotland, it was nothing more than a stage in the process, subject to criteria that were inconsistently applied and never subsequently monitored. CCS found it difficult to identify any intrinsic value in designation, and although some local authorities bought into the idea, others chose not to pursue designation for sites that could easily have been country parks.²⁷ As far as users were concerned, the terminology offered few guarantees to visitors beyond toilets, parking space and some form of catering. Prior knowledge of the site would be essential to ensure that the activity being sought by a prospective visitor was available at any given locality. Tarrant's curious suggestion that the branding is 'potent' and nationally recognised is unsupportable – and contradicts his own evidence that survey respondents struggled to express what it signified.²⁸

The activities people undertake as recreation depend on the conjunction of their preferences for diverse types of activity, a convenient supply to support those preferences, and their awareness of the existence of that supply in an acceptable and comfortable setting. The general understanding of people's aspirations at the outset was that they needed space to park their cars, and space nearby for picnicking, with other facilities to support a countryside stay, but as Veal pointed out in 1973, no

²⁷ Edinburgh: National Records of Scotland: Countryside Commission for Scotland Archive CCS6/1: T Huxley, 'Progress on the creation of Country Parks in Scotland: A review', paper for meeting 2 June 1969.

²⁸ Tarrant, 'Country Park Provision', p. 397.

research had been undertaken on the purpose, activities, facilities or even the need for country parks: '[Providers] need information... to decide on...what activities to provide for, and for whom.'²⁹ As a result, supply was entirely based on providers' interpretation of what to provide, rather than on the aspirations and expectations of users, while convenience was overruled by the availability of suitable and affordable land for park development.

As for awareness-raising, this took a very limited form. After a celebratory opening, usually given local press coverage, relatively little active promotion was generally undertaken, and a heavy emphasis was placed on the use of leaflets in Tourist Information Centres and the publicity associated with special events and seasonal activities. Some parks were inevitably more effective at this than others. The lessons learned from the pilot awareness project at Lochore Meadows extended no further than the widespread use of passive leafleting to people already looking for ideas about where to go.³⁰ The parks' effectiveness can only have been weakened by a lower level of awareness of their existence, whilst their variable nature surely demanded stronger publicity about what each could offer to its visitors. A great deal was taken for granted in this respect.

Paul Cloke has argued that, in Margaret Thatcher's Britain, the countryside became an exploitable commodity.³¹ He pointed out, among other things, the damaging effect of the market-driven forestry policy of the 1980s, especially in Scotland, and an

²⁹ A. J. Veal, *A Discussion of the Role of Environmental Perception in Recreation Planning, with particular reference to Country Parks, Forests and Sports Centres* (Birmingham: Countryside Commission/Centre for Urban and Regional Studies, 1973), pp. 4, 12.

³⁰ CCS, 'Promoting Lochore Meadows Country Park', pp. 4-8.

³¹ Cloke, 'The Countryside', pp. 269-270.

agricultural policy that favoured production ahead of the environment.³² But opportunities for commodification also came from enjoyment of the countryside, including ‘pay-as-you-enter’ landscapes, and (pace Raphael Samuel) the exploitation of countryside heritage as entertainment.³³ The private sector countryside sites in Scotland, all of them charging admission, might have been examples, were it not for the fact that (as chapter 8 shows) they all emerged in the 1970s, before the philosophical shift in policy of the 1980s. Among these, Finlaystone and Dalkeith emphasise countryside enjoyment, but Kelburn is more populist and entertainment-focussed. Some critics have characterised the Kelburn approach as ‘disney-fying’ the heritage countryside (in Scotland we might call this ‘Brigadooning’) but few go so far as Tom Paulin, who described ‘a loathsome collection of theme parks and dead values’.³⁴ While Scotland certainly has a track record in trivialising its history and culture, few of its country parks can legitimately be accused of this; after all, they generally target locals, not tourists. However, this does not exempt them from challenge in other exploitative respects: Hillend’s ski slope, dominating its landscape and visible for miles, is the most egregious example, but golf courses and watersports facilities could also be seen as compromising their natural settings.

³² *Ibid.*, p. 275.

³³ Samuel, *Theatres of Memory*, p. 260.

³⁴ Tom Paulin, *The Independent*, 5 October 1993, cited by Samuel, *Theatres of Memory*, p. 260.



Figure 9.3: Hillend Country Park, Midlothian (Author's collection)

Commodification can therefore be argued for individual parks, in that they assembled countryside recreation packages that combined some activities but neglected others. This in turn affected their likely audiences. Nature-lovers might well have despaired at Strathclyde's funfair and amusement arcade, or at the constant traffic rumble of the M8 at Polkemmet, while pleasure-seekers might have expressed boredom at Muiravonside's offer of a riverbank walk, or Eglinton's footpaths through farmland. However, there was always the possibility of another park, perhaps not far away, that would be more suited to individual preferences. As for the Scottish portfolio as a whole, though, commodification is a less supportable argument. Designation might have been expected to draw the parks together within a brand, but was undermined by variety, inconsistency and the failure to develop any underlying significance such as quality assurance. Designation could have been used much more pro-actively, as an indicator of minimum levels of facilities provision, and of standard of maintenance, but this proved to be a further missed opportunity.



Figure 9.4: *The Arcade, Strathclyde Country Park, Lanarkshire (Author's collection)*

Phasing

The introduction noted that two commentators had suggested distinct phases of policy in relation to country parks following the 1960s legislation, and that Scotland offers examples of each of the policy emphases that they identified. To what extent, then, does Scotland reflect these phases, and are they as clearly delimited chronologically as the commentators suggest?

Taking Lambert's phases first, honeypot arguments featured strongly in early applications, such as at Balloch, while reorientation was evident, for instance, in the 'Wee Mary' bus project at Lochore Meadows, aiming to widen access to the site.³⁵ Brodick was promoted as a gateway site to the adjacent mountainous country behind it, while Veal's enterprise phase may be reflected in the Scottish private sector's

³⁵ Edinburgh: National Records of Scotland: Countryside Commission for Scotland Archive CCS3/3: Papers for meeting 14 November 1972; CCS: *Wee Mary the Country Bus*.

complementary provision of countryside recreation. But what is more difficult in the Scottish context is seeing any coherent (or chronological) pattern behind these examples. Muirshiel, an early site, was developed with distraction partly in mind, but its remoteness argues that it could not have operated in this way; it was also planned from the outset to act as a gateway to the wider Clyde-Muirshiel area, long before the start of Lambert's gateway phase. Balloch provided valuable parking and picnic space close by Loch Lomond, and was thus a potential honeypot; but it had already existed as public open space for many years, and had been acquired specifically to enable Glasgow people to enjoy Loch Lomond, not to encourage them to change their destination. The privately-owned sites pre-date the enterprise culture of the 1980s. The motivation behind country parks in Scotland was usually more the direct provision of opportunities, and was only rarely driven by a wider policy objective.

So, although there were policy shifts during CCS' lifetime, these were by no means as clear-cut as the English analysis would imply. Still less did they represent major changes in the way parks were provided or in the focus of the parks themselves. The honeypot idea was already under challenge in Scotland in 1972, and was rejected outright in the 1976 Glen Nevis project, but there is no detectable chronology for the wholesale adoption of either reorientation or gateway principles in Scotland. As for Veal's interpretation, it is arguable that Scotland never left the 'demand' phase: when CCS' responsibilities were transferred to SNH in 1992, the handover document noted that CCS had been demand-led throughout its existence.³⁶ In Scotland, at least, formal policy and practical implementation operated independently most of the time.

³⁶ Edinburgh: National Records of Scotland: Countryside Commission for Scotland Archive CCS3/39: Papers for handover meeting between CCS and SNH, 10 March 1992.

Strategic location

The introduction discussed the different perspectives of commentators who either advocated the urban fringe as the most suitable location for country parks, or regarded the urban fringes as second-rate, aesthetically compromised landscapes. CCS' own uncertain approach, and vacillation, on this issue are well-evidenced in this narrative. It is a composite problem, relating to the strategy of locating the parks, both in relation to one another and to other countryside recreation opportunities, as well as to the desirability of locating the parks within reach of wider audiences.

Although CCS clearly intended to take a strategic view on location, it very quickly moved to a more pragmatic and reactive approach. The early report commissioned to identify existing provision and prevent duplication was never utilised, and the opening flurry of unsuitable projects was followed by a dearth of applications that led to a more ambivalent attitude to eligibility criteria. Three factors came into play here: the inaccurate assessment of demand in Scotland, the limited resources made available, and the decisive role given to local authorities. Had demand exceeded the possibilities of supply, CCS would have at least had a power of veto, giving it an opportunity to apply strategy in selection. An increased resource level could have enabled land acquisition, which would have extended locational possibilities beyond the boundaries of pre-existing landholdings, allowing CCS to influence location more directly. Making local authorities responsible for country park provision made it impossible for CCS to assert any strategy of its own as regards siting; it was entirely at the behest of the authorities, and whether they wanted a park at all, let alone where it might be placed. CCS' best attempt to offer a strategic approach, the *Park System*, came too late and had little influence over location.

In these circumstances, any view taken by CCS on the urban fringe would always have been academic; whatever the current priority, the parks would be created where local authorities wanted them. CCS' only effective power was to decline an application, and it had to exercise this capability carefully once it became clear that the assumed demand would not provide the applications it needed. The lower than expected level of resources, and the consequential preference for upgrades rather than new sites, meant that most parks' locations were pre-determined by earlier decisions. Those new sites reclaimed from contaminated land were similarly in locations that were already determined.

Fitton's contention that people preferred countryside far from towns may have reflected the situation in England in 1977, but does not bear close examination in relation to Scotland.³⁷ Although visitor numbers are unreliable, it is clear that some urban fringe sites are among the most popular parks, while some deeply rural sites find themselves towards the lower end of the popularity scale. However, Susan Walker's work suggests that a more likely determinant of popularity was the offer made by the park, with those parks more aware of their audience, and offering a better visitor experience, likely to be more successful numerically. Whilst accessibility from a large neighbouring population was clearly important, a boring and unimaginative park, even if located close to people, would still struggle to attract an audience, whilst a remoter site could succeed if it were sufficiently attractive to appeal beyond its immediate catchment. The different experiences and popularity of the very unimaginative Gartmorn Dam and the multi-faceted Polkemmet, both urban fringe sites, and the remote but popular Culzean and the isolated and unprepossessing Muirshiel illustrate

³⁷ Fitton, 'The Problems of Opportunity', p. 86.

this well. Although accessibility was a key element in both the White Paper and the legislation, it was not as critical a factor in take-up as was originally envisaged.

Some Scottish parks give credence to Shoard's view of the edgelands as a compromised landscape, and themselves embody this by combining a countryside experience with the more practical needs of public utilities or production. On land supposedly earmarked for recreation, they allowed unsightly quantities of concrete and steel for reservoirs, pylons and other utility-related infrastructure, or aesthetically unattractive agricultural production.³⁸ They also permitted the introduction of essentially urban features (sports structures, hotels, funfair and play equipment) to further disfigure the edgeland landscape. As seems to have been the case in England, some Scottish country parks align with other edgeland development in blurring the distinction between urban and rural.

Social inclusion

Scholars are generally agreed on the fact that country parks tended to attract particular people-groups, and lacked appeal to others. A policy predicated on the need to provide alternative destinations for car owners might be expected to appeal to the most mobile in the population, and since car-owners were more likely to be affluent middle-class professionals, the outcome is hardly surprising. But this observation has to be modified in relation to Scotland; Walker's work highlighted the effectiveness of parks like Polkemmet in appealing to blue-collar visitors, while Lochore Meadows, located in a former mining community, was also able to show an appeal beyond the typical professional.³⁹ Culzean attracted popular, low-cost coach trips run from Ayr, as well

³⁸ Bonaly, on the Edinburgh fringe, is an especially egregious example of this, but there are others.

³⁹ Walker, *Countryside Recreation in Central Scotland*.

as independent motorists.⁴⁰ However, as Walker herself noted, in general provision tended to favour car owners, and some Scottish country parks were not easily accessible in any other way.⁴¹ The choice of activities provided also introduced an element of selectivity, in that different activities encouraged different participant profiles, and demanded sometimes expensive or hard-to-transport accessories such as canoes or horses.⁴² Veal's view was that provision had largely been determined by planners who paid more attention to the facilities they wanted to provide than to the socio-demographics of those who would use them.⁴³ He posited that there was a void in understanding the real needs of people, and Curry's argument that there was a failure to understand the full range of people's aspirations endorses this view.⁴⁴

The Scottish evidence tends to support this position. Although there were sites that had a broader appeal than to the traditional white-collar audience, these were not the general rule, and they had not necessarily been intended to secure this breadth of audience; some were simply benefitting from locations easily accessed by less affluent populations. Arthur Oldham's attempt to secure country park status for sites close to the Glasgow city boundary failed, where a commitment to inclusion would surely have demanded a successful outcome for Rouken Glen and Cathkin Braes. To the extent that it was achieved at all, social inclusion in Scotland's country parks was achieved more incidentally than deliberately. There were nevertheless attempts to widen the audience for some parks beyond the archetypal countryside enthusiast. Aden set out from the start to be a heritage attraction as well as a recreational space. Hillend

⁴⁰ Pers. Obs. The author lived in Ayr in the 1970s and saw many such excursions advertised.

⁴¹ Walker, *Countryside Recreation in Central Scotland*, p. 21.

⁴² Coppock and Duffield, *Spatial Analysis*, pp. 36-37.

⁴³ Veal, *Environmental Perception*, p. 6.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 12; Curry, *Countryside Recreation*, pp. xiii, 28.

provided for skiers, something no other Scottish country park offered. Balmedie expanded the idea of countryside into a beach and dunes environment quite different from the usual country park topography. The lack of uniformity of provision, which limited the commodification of the country park, may have enabled a wider degree of participation than might otherwise have been achieved. There is also evidence that supply stimulated demand for opportunities that had not previously been accessible, and that some parks made sports opportunities – even expensive ones - available to a wider, and less elitist, audience than they had previously enjoyed.⁴⁵

The Scottish parks demonstrate a marked lack of public engagement in the lead-up to opening. Only at Aden is there any record of a consultation with local people about their aspirations for the use of the space on offer; elsewhere, provision was top-down, and followed the ‘if you build it, they will come’ principle. Curry and Veal thus have a point in that people’s preferences were not established before delivery, and this is borne out by Coppock and Duffield’s critique of research in Scotland.⁴⁶ This was not helped by a persistent lack of meaningful empirical data, by CCS’ failure to utilise its 1968 report on existing provision, or by its reluctance to embrace STARPS, which had promised to answer questions of inclusion as well as of demand and supply. But in defence of the planners, consultation was by no means the standard practice in this era that it later became. Only very basic research into recreational activity and preferences had taken place even into the 1980s, as Walker and Duffield point out:⁴⁷ Groome is right to say that providers were low on the learning curve in this respect.⁴⁸

⁴⁵ Coppock and Duffield, *Spatial Analysis*, pp. 58, 153.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 71.

⁴⁷ Susan Walker and Brian S. Duffield, ‘Urban Parks and Open Spaces: An Overview’, *Landscape Research*, 8.2 (1983), 2–12 (pp. 7-9).

⁴⁸ Groome, *Planning and Rural Recreation*, p. 90.



Figure 9.5: Balmedie Country Park, Aberdeenshire (Author's collection)

Country parks fall largely within Chris Smout's understanding of inclusive, rather than exclusive, recreation.⁴⁹ Most are free to enter; although pricing for admission was considered in 1976, it was largely discarded in favour of other revenue sources such as charges within the park for comestibles and mementos, and renting out some of the land for agriculture.⁵⁰ Palacerigg trialled a charge for admission but adverse public reaction prompted a speedy rethink.⁵¹ Although some parks effectively excluded the less affluent by virtue of a more inaccessible location that required private transport, provision was never as defensive as the language of the legislators suggested, and much of what was provided through country parks was driven by more positive objectives including quality of life, nature conservation, expansion of opportunity, and heritage conservation. Many of Scotland's country parks thus demonstrate much

⁴⁹ Smout, *The Highlands and the Roots of Green Consciousness*, pp. 24-27.

⁵⁰ C. Gordon, 'Financing Countryside Recreation as part of a Local Authority's Responsibilities' in *Economic Aspects of Countryside Recreation Management*, Report on CRRAG conference at Durham 1976 London: Janssen Services, 1976), pp 71-76 (pp. 73-74)

⁵¹ Karen Hollingsworth, 'Country Parks: Management Policy for the Next Millennium' (Unpublished MSc. Thesis, Strathclyde University, 1997), p. 101. Several parks charge for car parking.

more positive views of countryside access, and the desirability of widening availability of these opportunities, than lay behind the original concept.

Values and countryside interpretation

Several commentators have argued that the evolution of countryside recreation reflects the dominant role of proprietors and the primacy of proprietorial values, with consequences in terms of land-use priorities, access, and deflection of disruptive activity. And there is plenty of evidence within the Scottish country park story of the power and influence of landowners and allied interests. The structure of the debate allowed landowners to assert their own uses of the Scottish countryside against the aspirations of others, using arguments of tradition, stewardship and the importance of production, essentially the same arguments that had been deployed successfully in 1949 to defeat the national park proposals.

The 'Countryside in 1970' conferences illustrate this. The 1963 conference's Chart of Human Impacts was a document heavily influenced (in its recreation section) by anecdotal evidence from landowners of over-stated or non-existent threats. The ministerial statement at the 1965 event was an attempt by the government to respond to pressure from a vociferous countryside lobby that it wished to defuse. By 1970, the conference had become significant enough to attract the attendance of the Prime Minister, Edward Heath; this was no passing sideshow.⁵² Study Group 9 had brought more balance to the Scottish debate at the 1965 conference, and continued to meet afterwards as a kind of shadow Commission, but was dominated by proprietorial

⁵² 'The Countryside in 1970', *Proceedings of the Third Conference, October 1970* (London: Royal Society of Arts, 1970), pp. 166-168. Heath told the conference 'We have heeded your message, and we are acting in its spirit. Keep us up to the mark in the future.' (p. 168).

interests, to the exclusion of social or economic issues; field sports thereby gained an undue prominence.

Yet agriculture probably had a more significant bearing on the implementation of country park policy. The Earl of Arbutnot, a CCS commissioner, went on record in 1975 opposing the use of urban fringe land for recreation, as it was too valuable agriculturally.⁵³ At a time when high priority was given to agricultural self-sufficiency, this was a difficult argument to counter, not least since Abercrombie had also highlighted the need for agriculture as a reinforcing green belt presence in Scotland.⁵⁴ Country parks showed a degree of deference to agricultural needs, with several incorporating, either centrally or peripherally, agricultural land uses alongside recreational ones, sometimes dressed up as opportunities to educate the visiting public about agriculture but usually without the interpretation that would have facilitated this. The landowner lobby was strong, well-organised, and well-connected, and Scottish examples tend to confirm Harrison's assertion that personal freedom took second place behind the primacy of traditional land uses, or those for which tradition and aesthetic value could be argued.⁵⁵

The role of the Scottish voluntary sector, in contrast, was a subdued one. Although Scotland had preservationist bodies, such as the APRS, their contribution was muted; most were small and had 'little influence in high places'.⁵⁶ APRS was represented at the 'Countryside in 1970', but played no part in study groups. Access lobbies were also much smaller and less vocal than their English counterparts, partly because

⁵³ Arbutnot, 'Land Resources for Recreation', p. 4.

⁵⁴ Abercrombie, *Clyde Valley Regional Plan* (1946).

⁵⁵ Harrison, *Countryside Recreation*, p. 155.

⁵⁶ Shucksmith and Lloyd, 'Rural Planning in Scotland', p. 108.

access was less problematic, but also because conservation issues in Scotland were always tempered by economic or employment possibilities.⁵⁷ Pressure groups never had the influence they did in England, and the most significant voluntary voices were dominated by familiar landholding interests, such as the NTS, represented at the 'Countryside in 1970' by the Earl of Wemyss; also in attendance were Lord Burton, on behalf of the Scottish Field Sports Society, the Earl of Haddo, for the SLF, and Lt. Col. Grant, a major Cairngorm landowner, for the STB.⁵⁸ To the extent that a voluntary voice was heard at all, it too was the voice of the proprietors.

Scotland also demonstrates the importance of the network of informal influence identified by Chris Baur.⁵⁹ The case studies for Culzean and Chatelherault show this informal network in action, at Culzean to good effect, at Chatelherault less convincingly. Aden shows a similar effect based around the overlapping roles of Magnus Fladmark and his associated connections. It can also be seen in the appointments made to the new Commission, where the SDD's network of contacts favoured landed interests over those of recreation, to the chagrin of SCAC.⁶⁰ The example *par excellence*, though, was Jamie Stormonth Darling, the NTS Secretary, who worked his considerable network tirelessly to steer decisions in favour of his organisation's aspirations. Other parks benefitted from the work of champions who could command attention where it mattered, but the country parks that never were demonstrate an absence of informal influence that contributed to their failure.⁶¹

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 108.

⁵⁸ 'The Countryside in 1970' *Proceedings 1965*, pp. 159–76.

⁵⁹ Chris Baur: *The Scotsman*, 18 September 1978.

⁶⁰ Glasgow: Strathclyde University: Scottish Countryside Activities Council Archive, report on Annual General Meeting, 15 February 1986, and Council minutes 25 October 1986. The context suggests this had been a complaint also voiced much earlier.

⁶¹ Edinburgh, National Records of Scotland, SDD Archives DD12/2846, File on countryside recreation, p. 2.

Further observations

Education

Matless' analysis of the English landscape drew attention to alternative, albeit less potent, interpretations of the countryside, and also acknowledged the idea of 'educated enjoyment' of its benefits, a concept rooted in the idea that people should be equipped to understand and interpret a landscape that would be alien to them.⁶²

The education dimension, which reflects an underlying set of values, was initially embraced by the preservationists who thought that people's behaviour could be addressed through a combination of education and enforcement. It surfaced again in the Scottish legislation, which required country parks to offer an educational dimension, and was strengthened by a 1972 policy commitment to advance 'sympathy for the countryside'. This requirement was generally interpreted at face value, and several Scottish country parks committed significantly to informing their audiences on matters relating to conservation and wildlife that would help them better understand what they might encounter during their visit.

Worthy as this was, though, it was not the original intention of those promoting education, which had been to align people's views more closely with the perspective of the proprietor. An educated visitor would understand the importance of behavioural matters such as closing gates, keeping dogs away from stock, and not lighting fires. Over time they would come to see the value of countryside practices such as hunting, shooting and fishing as means of conserving both game stocks and tradition, would recognise the landowner's benevolent stewardship of his property and the livelihoods

⁶² Matless, *Landscape and Englishness*, p. 10.

of those who lived and worked there, and would avoid the prejudices of those who wished to see land more communally owned and utilised. Effectively, the education sought was a form of manipulation towards a particular point of view, rather than the general increase of knowledge; it embodied the self-assurance of the proprietors that their values were the true values of the countryside, and that the principal reason why anyone would not share this view was ignorance. Perhaps fortunately, country parks in Scotland failed to adopt this approach and concentrated on interpreting their audiences' visits.

Country parks as a type of open space

Urban parks emerged as a type of *rus in urbe* that imported the natural world into the pollution and overcrowding of the Victorian city. Scotland's country parks can be seen, at least in part, as a contrasting *urbs in rure*; their features include elements alien to the countryside, but commonplace in urban parks, such as equipped children's play areas, built facilities for visitors, horticulture and surfaced paths. Scottish country parks are a mixture of planned and natural landscapes, often within the same setting. The planned elements distinguish them from the open countryside, but the naturalness of their surroundings, and the amount of space on offer, also set them apart from their urban counterparts, where planned landscapes tend to dominate, and where quiet, reflective space can be harder to find. The extent to which the Scottish parks carry forward the heritage of the country estate also preserves planned elements within their landscapes. They offer formal gardens, arboreta and other ornamentation, but the country estate was genuinely a part of the countryside, and many of these parks also have more natural surroundings. The parks have allowed the preservation of the properties, and with them the wider rural heritage, of the estates.

The Victorian park also had a moral dimension, as a means of regulating behaviour and exposing the lower orders to respectable society and its values. Clearly, Scottish country parks fit the historic pattern of deploying public open space in this way. The origins of the parks show the prominence of behavioural issues in creating political pressure, including issues of practical damage but also concerns over respectability and appropriate activities, dress and habits. The original ‘honeypot’ intention of country parks aimed in part to separate indecorous behaviour from those who wished to commune with natural beauty. They further reflected the allied agenda of moral improvement, categorising the mass of visitors as requiring education and development before admission into higher levels of countryside appreciation. This argument was still being voiced in 1993: ‘today our rural areas are burdened with people who have no understanding of agriculture or country ways.’⁶³

Thus, the improvement aspirations espoused by the protagonists of urban parks in the nineteenth century were reflected in the expectation that exposure to the countryside would stimulate an understanding of country life consistent with the dominant viewpoint and values. Local authority by-laws could be used to prohibit more extreme behaviours, and the country park legislation (and funding) provided for ranger services with a dual brief of improving people’s understanding of the countryside while also enforcing the rules. Although the policy evolved to a much more positive view of engagement with the countryside, the country park’s origins lie firmly within a framework of containment and moral improvement. In this they conform to the expectations of early preservationists embodied in the Country Code, allowing access

⁶³ S. Courtauld: ‘Whose Land is it Anyway?’ *Daily Telegraph*, 3 May 1993, cited by C. Minay, ‘Contrasting Approaches to Rural Economic Development’, in R. Macdonald and H. Thomas (eds.), *Nationality and Planning in Scotland and Wales* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1997), pp. 181–202 (p. 184).

on terms set by proprietors, founded on those values and priorities, and conceding only expendable land rather than enabling wider access to recreational opportunity. This adds further credence to the scholarly arguments propounded by Aitchison, Harrison, Darby and others, that countryside policy reflected one set of interests at the expense of others.⁶⁴

Scottish distinctiveness

Scottish distinctiveness was reflected in the range of different policy initiatives being implemented in the 1960s, by the unique problems and issues created through decline of traditional industries, by New Towns and high-rise housing, and by the need to diversify the economy, especially the rural economy, into new areas such as tourism. Scotland was also distinctive politically, in having a strong nationalist force able to critique policies that might be insufficiently attentive to Scotland. This distinctiveness received lip service, through the likes of Study Group 9 and the pronouncements of ministers and others, but in reality the country park policy was designed for England, and imposed on (or embraced by) Scotland as an expedient means of securing a share of recreation resources for the country, regardless of needs and priorities.

John Moir identified several similarities between the constituent parts of the UK in relation to designated landscapes. But he also drew attention to a very different landscape in Scotland, to distinguishing historical and cultural factors, to a less nucleated countryside, and to a different political context, as well as a reduced significance for access issues and less opposition to rural development.⁶⁵ The

⁶⁴ Aitchison *et al*, *Leisure and Tourism Landscapes*, p. 64; Harrison, *Countryside Recreation*, p. 155; Darby, *Landscape and Identity*, p. 9.

⁶⁵ Moir, 'Designation of Valued Landscapes', p. 219, 232.

protectionist principles that dominated much of the debate in England & Wales were subordinate in Scotland to a close relationship between paternalism, scenic beauty, and economic deprivation.⁶⁶ The provisions of the Countryside (Scotland) Act were developed by Westminster and were essentially imposed on Scotland. As a piece of generally benevolent legislation, and one with support from influential people in Scotland, this attracted little controversy at the time, but it does exemplify that this approach was not always as beneficial as it might have been had the policy been determined in Scotland itself.

Contextual influences

Initially, country parks seem to have developed independently of the developing environmental movement – their primary purpose was recreation – but they rapidly acquired an environmental aspect, not least in Scotland where there was a statutory requirement to provide education for visitors. Eleven parks developed reserve areas set aside for this purpose, with most others at least offering nature trails and hands-on natural experiences for children. Nature conservation thus became a strong agenda for many parks, reflecting the level of public interest as well as the concerns of site managers, and it can be argued that it was a primary consideration at some sites, including Palacerigg and John Muir.

Just as environmental interests were not static but evolving over this period, it is also possible to see shifts in recreation patterns. These were of two types: changes in the ways in which people used their leisure time generally, and changes in the appeal of different active recreation activities. The fashion for countryside motoring that

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 234.

prompted 'Fourth Wave' came to be eroded by fuel pricing, cheap foreign holidays, the development of indoor leisure centres, and the emergence of further leisure opportunities, particularly television. While not eliminating the demand for countryside recreation, they certainly helped to mitigate it. Within countryside recreation, however, a further shift can be observed. Recreation has always been diverse, and Sillitoe commented on this in his 1969 survey, whose sample was insufficient to reflect this diversity.⁶⁷ He named 23 sports in which people would like to participate, but observed that this list omitted a large range of other activities with small numbers of participants, but which in aggregate represented 10% of those wishing to participate.⁶⁸ Country parks helped to make this increased participation possible, both by providing low-cost access to some of the most sought-after sports (particularly golf, riding and sailing) and by extending the range of accessible active recreation with more local opportunities to learn orienteering, windsurfing, kayaking, canoeing, rowing and skiing, for instance. This was part of a wider movement that also embraced post-16 sport in colleges and universities, and which, coupled with equipment loans and coaching support, changed the nature of these activities from elitist preserves to more mass participation. Not all minority outdoor sports benefitted – country parks did little to advance the cause of motor-sports, an exceptionally disruptive countryside activity, and the funding restrictions constrained their impact on pitch-based sports – but the parks did become part of a wider movement towards the diversification of sports and their participants.

⁶⁷ Sillitoe, *Planning for Leisure*, p. 32.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 136.

External influences

Surprisingly little reference has been made in this thesis to the role of influences from outside the United Kingdom in the formulation of country park policy. Dower did include, in 'Fourth Wave', reference to approaches to recreation in the USA, France, and the Netherlands, describing them as 'useful guides for Britain', and drew heavily on the implications of the ORRRC report on outdoor recreation in the USA, which he saw as foreshadowing what would occur in the UK.⁶⁹ So it is surprising that so little attention was given, in Scotland at least, to the solutions being developed in other countries affected by the growth in car ownership. Space does not allow this thesis to undertake a comparative analysis of policy and provision across a range of jurisdictions, but recreational spaces intended to address a need for high-intensity recreation were provided in the Netherlands, Germany and Scandinavia during this period and their experience might have contributed usefully to progress in the UK.⁷⁰ There was occasional overseas input, for instance when Gil Carling, from Banff and Buchan District Council, toured Denmark; his subsequent report helped with the development of Aden's own outdoor museum, as did Magnus Fladmark's familiarity with established Scandinavian facilities such as Frilandsmuseet in Copenhagen and Skansen in Stockholm.⁷¹ But importing experience from abroad was rare in Scotland.

⁶⁹ Dower, 'Fourth Wave', pp. 123, 158, 179-184.

⁷⁰ Peter Scott Planning Services, *Access to the Countryside in Selected European Countries: A Review of Access Rights, Legislation and Associated Arrangements in Denmark, Germany, Norway and Sweden* (Perth: Scottish Natural Heritage, 1998), pp. 9–10.

⁷¹ Aberdeen: Aberdeenshire County Archives: Banff and Buchan District Council Archive: Report to Aden Management Subcommittee, 7 January 1988; Hill, 'Ethnology', p. 41; Hill, 'The North East of Scotland Agricultural Heritage Centre', p. 211.

An expendable landscape?

As Christopher Tilley has pointed out, the dominant political values of the time have significant impact on the judgments that allow some landscapes to be valued while others are discounted as of less value.⁷² Matless drew attention to an active process of containment that was worked out through policies delimiting both permitted activities and locations where activities might take place without disrupting a purer form of countryside enjoyment.⁷³ Part of the appeal of the country park idea lay in its use of expendable landscapes, which could be sacrificed relatively painlessly if the outcome were a reduction in pressure on more valued spaces – in Scotland, landscapes of production and those of aristocratic sport. The fact that the parks would be largely under the control of local authorities, and the absence of any significant resource for land acquisition, made this solution even more attractive for the vested countryside interests that dominated the Scottish landscape. It was improbable that a solution likely to be most vigorously sought by urban local authorities would impinge on the remoter countryside of the landed estates. Country parks also offered an attractive alternative to the threat represented by national parks, dealing with the demand for recreational space at little or no cost to traditional interests. To this extent, the policy validates the assertion made by Cara Aitchison *et al*, of a dominant hegemony impeding any progress towards a countryside for all while promoting an aesthetic view of the countryside that embraces traditional land use but abhors any alternative *ipso facto*.⁷⁴

⁷² Christopher Tilley, 'Introduction: Identity, Place, Landscape and Heritage', *J. of Material Culture*, 11 (2006), 7-32 (p. 15).

⁷³ Matless, *Landscape and Englishness*, p. 66.

⁷⁴ Aitchison *et al*, *Leisure and Tourism Landscapes*, p. 50.

This analysis, however, risks overlooking a crucial factor: the nature of the parks themselves. Those who looked forward to a series of expendable landscapes must have been surprised at the choice of Culzean as the first country park; this was in no sense a landscape easily sacrificed to recreation. However, neither Jamie Stormonth Darling nor CCS had any intention of transforming Culzean, and the provision they made for visitors confirms their determination not to allow designation to change the character of the site in any material way. And in fact, few sites were developed specifically for the high-intensity use envisaged in 'Fourth Wave'; many had alternative agendas, and most retained significant rural character and scenic quality. Few could legitimately have been described as idyllic, but several rose above the everyday countryside experience and offered at least an enhanced encounter with nature as well as space for active and passive recreation. The site that represented the biggest trade-off with 'urban values' was Strathclyde, but development here was already under way when the legislation went through, transforming a large, highly visible, and badly contaminated site where any countryside content, however compromised, would represent an improvement.

Also in conflict with the notion of expendable landscapes is the fact that a substantial proportion of Scotland's country parks incorporate the policies of former country houses and other heritage structures. These sites were valuable both functionally, as open space, and culturally, as heritage, and countryside funding offered the opportunity to make the properties easier and more worthwhile to visit, increasing the likelihood of preservation. For local authorities, several of whom had acquired these estates cheaply but without the capacity to maintain them, countryside funding enabled works that would protect their investment as well as provide ratepayers with

recreational opportunities. For private owners struggling to maintain historic properties, countryside capital allowed them to develop visitor infrastructure, at low cost to themselves, to generate the revenue streams they needed. These were not expendable landscapes, but settings in need of conservation and protection, which the legislation offered an opportunity to tackle.



Figure 9.6: Vogrie Country Park, Midlothian: an example of the country house country park. (Author's collection)

Countryside for all?

In spite of their 'urban' elements, none of the Scottish parks proved in any way controversial to the public; even the most difficult, Chatelherault, was only problematic to its providers, not to its potential users. Indeed, in contrast to some other recreational developments, Scottish country parks were well-received, and none required a Public Inquiry. This is arguably because they mostly fit within their landscape context; those that were the grounds of country houses have retained that appearance and heritage, those that were unimproved countryside remain as natural as they were before

designation, and those that were reclamation sites represent a significant improvement on their predecessor landscapes. Even those elements that might have been contentious, such as zoos and wildlife pens, have been accepted. This contrasts significantly with Christopher Minay's perception of 'a widely-held view that the development of rural areas is an arena of conflict between competing interests'.⁷⁵ Whilst rural Scotland offers several examples of conflict over rural development, his perspective clearly needs to be tempered in relation to country parks. Indeed, it could be argued that some of the parks succeeded in reconciling recreational, environmental and cultural values in ways that might have surprised the inter-war planners.

What interpretation of the landscape, then, is embodied in country parks in Scotland? Terry Marsden proposed a typology of four distinct landscape types for the lowlands of England: preserved landscapes, where the emphasis is anti-development and preservationist; contested countryside, where local interests dominate but are under challenge; clientelist countryside, where local interests coincide with those of state agencies, and paternalistic countryside, where proprietors dominate both as stewards and as the holders of entitlement.⁷⁶ Minay's interpretation of this typology in a Scottish context concluded that the paternalistic countryside was dominant, in spite of attempts to challenge this through state agencies with alternative agendas.⁷⁷ Scotland's country park story confirms this interpretation; for example, from a 'country park in all but name', Lord Moray saw himself not only as a businessman entitled to exploit the recreation potential of his estate at Doune, but also as a trustee of what he had

⁷⁵ C. Minay, 'Contrasting Approaches', p. 184.

⁷⁶ Terry Marsden et al, *Constructing the Countryside*, pp. 187–89.

⁷⁷ Minay, 'Contrasting Approaches', p. 185.

inherited and would, in due course, hand on.⁷⁸ The interpretation also applies to local authority proprietors: the approach was top-down, founded in the notion that the landowner (whether an individual or a council) instinctively knows what is best for the land and its potential users. CCS acknowledged this in 1977: 'there may be...a paternalistic attitude in the approach of providers...that pays inadequate regard to what people actually want.'⁷⁹ It is interesting that a measure originally intended by those stewarding Scotland's land to provide low-value facilities to protect landscapes of production and scenic beauty from being over-run, has provided recreational landscapes that are scenically attractive in their own right, and which now create their own demands for preservation and conservation. It was never the 'Countryside for All' hoped for in some quarters, but it has been more democratic than it might have been.⁸⁰

⁷⁸ J. Roger Carr, 'An Estate's Point of View', in J. Tivy and G. Dickinson (eds.), 'Land Resources for Recreation in Scotland: Report on Symposium held in St Andrews' (Unpublished conference report, 1976), pp. 30–32 (p. 30). Carr later became Chair of CCS.

⁷⁹ Edinburgh: National Records of Scotland: Countryside Commission for Scotland Archive CCS3/11: Papers for meeting 10 May 1977.

⁸⁰ Fred Coalter, J.A. Long, and Brian S. Duffield, *The Rationale for Public Sector Investment in Leisure* (London: ESRC, 1986), cited by Harrison, *Countryside Recreation*, p. 43; Aitchison *et al*, *Leisure and Tourism Landscapes*, p. 51.

Chapter 10: Conclusion

‘I think it took [us] thirty years to answer the question: “What is a country park?”’

Bill Wilson, Park Ranger, Lochore Meadows Country Park¹

The research study

The research questions launching this study were foundational, relating to the need for parks in the Scottish countryside, how the locations were chosen, and what they offered that the countryside itself could not. The issue of policy integration also arose: how did country parks fit alongside other significant policy interventions in Scotland at this time? Further questions arose from the limited historiography on country parks, which revealed not only differences of view between historians over fundamental questions such as success, impact, and commodification of the countryside, but also the paucity of analysis in a specifically Scottish context, manifestly distinctive but largely overlooked or conflated with its larger neighbour.

This thesis has addressed these deficits. It has, for the first time, comprehensively explored the origins and implementation of country park policy from a Scottish perspective, recognising the factors that made Scotland distinctive and the extent to which that distinctiveness was reflected in a recreation policy that originated in English anxieties. It has uncovered the weaknesses in both the evidence base and in the implementation process in Scotland, and the ways in which the policy had to evolve, even to be subverted, to achieve results. It has emphasised the top-down nature of the process and the failure to consider either the evidence of demand or the

¹ Pers. Comm. Bill Wilson, retired ranger at Lochore Meadows Country Park, 11 January 2012.

aspirations of those for whom the policy was intended to provide. It has also highlighted the inconsistencies in the approach taken by the agency responsible for implementation, and the structural and accountability issues that made problematic delivery inevitable. It has thus made a new and significant contribution to the history of recreation and access in pre-devolution Scotland and provided the historic background to an important type of designated landscape. Above all, it has provided its unique contribution to the historical debate by supplying the missing Scottish dimension of the history of recreation policy in post-war Britain.

The broader picture

In conclusion, it is appropriate to stand back from the detail of country park history and look at the broader picture that might inform historians beyond the boundaries of Scotland or of twentieth-century recreation: issues of governance and power, of finance, of evidence, and of designation itself.

Scottish country park policy was always top-down. It was formulated in England and imposed on Scotland with little regard for suitability; the Scottish Office then oversaw and managed its implementation and provided direction to both CCS and local government. Although this approach was moderated to some extent over time, such as when CCS was given control over its own budget in 1981, and in later subversion, there was very little devolution of responsibility below the Scottish Office level, while Chatelherault illustrates that Westminster could still assert its own priorities when it chose to, regardless of Scottish sensibilities. In contrast, the bottom-up, public view on recreation was only rarely sounded during this period; consultation only took place

at Aden, and informed and methodologically sound research into the nature of demand was rare and of limited influence. But it is important to remember that consultation was not the standard practice that it came to be in the Blair years, and to recognise that research techniques capable of delivering the detailed segmentation needed to secure accurate and adequate data were – in the public sector at least – in their infancy, and had yet to gain the confidence of politicians.² There was also no public pressure for such involvement. Jamie Stormonth Darling’s key ingredients of country park policy were personalities, pounds and politics; a fourth ‘p’, that of people (in the broadest sense), was never formative in this period.

Individuals, on the other hand, clearly played a significant role; the case studies highlight both the effect of influence, and the consequences of not having this type of support. Stormonth Darling was the epitome, pulling strings and making suggestions in the ears of the powerful, but other individuals appear too, both behind the scenes and more formally through structures such as Study Group 9. Some perspectives had strong influence in the debate, while others were overlooked or suppressed; the network of influence identified by Chris Baur and others was prominent and effective at both the strategic and site-specific levels. Meanwhile, project champions such as Maurice Taylor and Stormonth Darling were able to use their political *nous* to position their projects to the best advantage in terms of funding eligibility, and Magnus Fladmark somehow managed to avoid any conflict-of-interest challenge in his dual role

² The Bains Report of 1974 recommended that local authorities set up research units, but research only became standard practice in councils during the 1990s after John Major’s Citizens’ Charter was launched. The author was among those recruited to bring the necessary skills into local authorities. ‘Laria - Our history’, <https://laria.org.uk/about-us/laria-a-short-history/> [Accessed 24 October 2018]

as external funder at CCS and site consultant at Aden, a combination of roles that would surely not be permitted today.

Finance, however, was always a challenge in Scotland. The initial resource allocation, constrained by the financial difficulties of the Wilson administration, was a serious hindrance to the ideals of strategic disposition of provision. Prior to reorganisation, Scottish authorities often found it difficult to find their share of the required funding, and it was not long after reorganisation that pressure began to be applied to public spending more generally, with Scotland ultimately becoming a target to be made an example of. But there was still enough money to bring 36 parks into designation – probably more than were really needed – and sufficient flexibility to allow for spending beyond ‘pure’ recreational need, in areas such as heritage acquisition, nature conservation, education and formal sports provision.

What can be seen to change over this period is the politics behind provision. At various times in the run-up to the Countryside (Scotland) Act 1967 we see the influence of social-democratic ideals of access and community rights, but also the resistance of proprietorship and vested interest; the democratisation of travel and tourism, but the intolerance of the behaviour that accompanied it, and the desire to deploy state mechanisms such as legislation, designation, enforcement and education against it. Scottish interest in the country park proposition was heavily influenced by the conservative landowning and field sports lobby, but also by Labour’s desire to defuse the burgeoning nationalist threat and to appear generous. There were strong elements of political expediency at work here. However, the Wilson government, hamstrung by the national economic situation, could never allocate the resource needed to implement the policy as planned; its successors had other priorities, and, in

Scotland at least, recreation funding passed under Westminster's radar as part of the block grant. Under Margaret Thatcher, this finance came under greater pressure, which Scotland resisted successfully for most of the decade. So although the political foundations moved, the mechanisms of governance in Scotland – the Scottish Office, the block grant and the local authorities – were largely able to ride these changes out as far as recreation was concerned. Even when the emphasis shifted away from state provision, the move to market-based solutions, apparent in other policy areas, largely left Scottish country parks untouched, while the limited private recreational provision in Scotland's countryside developed independently of any political initiative that might have supported it. Meanwhile, an area where the parks were particularly vulnerable to challenge, value for money, was not seriously scrutinised until Tony Blair's Best Value regime in the late 1990s. Up to this point, evidence played only a limited part in Scottish recreational policy formation or implementation.

The lack of credible evidence to support either the development of country park policy in Scotland or its successful implementation has been a recurring theme in this thesis. The absence of detailed information on recreation was not allowed to delay the conceptualisation of the country park, even though experts (including Michael Dower himself) urged preliminary research. The resulting vacuum was readily filled by anecdote, polemic and creative invention, which were allowed to drive the policy forward until reality intervened. Opportunities to widen the evidence base through enquiry or consultation were missed, especially by Study Group 9. Assumptions made about the inevitability of demand allowed policy-makers to separate accountability and powers - a political decision, rather than a rational assessment of the most effective structure for delivery - and gave considerable discretion to local authorities which were

often ambivalent about the problem and/or incapable of taking up the opportunity. STARPS proved to be a further missed opportunity to use evidence as a basis for shaping delivery. But, as policy analyst Paul Cairney has pointed out, post-war policy-making was generally made in a trial-and-error way aiming to achieve consensus, rather than in a scientific manner assembling and responding to evidence.³ Perhaps it is unreasonable, then, to have expected an evidence-based policy at this juncture – the concept really only gained traction during the Blair administration – but whether this justifies a policy based on misinformation and prejudice is a different matter.

Finally, designation surely needed to mean something more than a simple labelling. In the end, the ‘country park’ designation really only guaranteed the presence of parking and toilets; it conveyed nothing about the associations of protection, special management arrangements, environmental importance or cultural significance that are implicit in other landscape designations. Yet designation could have meant something, even allowing for the diversity embraced by the country park; it could have functioned as a quality measure, linking to management plans to improve and sustain care and maintenance. But formal monitoring of open space quality only became commonplace during the Blair administration, with ‘Green Flag’ awards launched in 1997.⁴ Meanwhile, the designation was devalued by the failure to control its deployment, allowing other providers and increasingly imprecise definition to erode its meaning further. Other landscape designations are applied by the state or its agents, have meaning and implications for owners and the wider public, and must be earned and maintained; they cannot simply be claimed or applied with impunity.

³ Paul Cairney, *The Politics of Evidence-Based Policy-Making* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), p. 19.

⁴ Keep Britain Tidy, ‘Green Flag Award History’, www.greenflagaward.org.uk/about-us/award-history [accessed 24 October 2018]

Further work

There is clearly scope for further work building on this thesis. It would be interesting to see whether the historical policy and structural issues identified here are reflected in other Scottish landscape quangos, such as the Nature Conservancy or the FC, or in other policy areas, such as the work of the Scottish Special Housing Association, the HIDB, or the New Town Development Corporations. Were the weaknesses inherent to CCS, such as the mismatch of powers and responsibilities, the intelligence deficit and the influence of powerful individuals, evidenced more widely in Scotland?

There are also possible parallels in other historical interventions, such as the conservation of Scotland's heritage structures, and the role of state bodies, planning authorities and voluntary organisations in determining priorities and the allocation of resources over time. Is there a similar pragmatic dimension to the implementation of a heritage programme in Scotland? How unique is Chatelherault as an illustration of the contentious nature of heritage spending? We might expect to see Stormonth Darling utilising his network in what was a key dimension of NTS' work; do other personalities with heritage interests – Ian Lindsay, for instance, or Charles Connell - have influence with Scottish Office luminaries?

Disputes also extended into aspects of nature conservation, and the balance between science, protection and access; does recreation provide a parallel to dispute resolution in the natural environment, and how were these issues mediated? Were there counterparts to the recreational power-brokers in environmental matters? And does the top-down approach apply equally to these areas of study, or is there a greater sense of the public view than is apparent in recreation?



Figure 10.1: The Countryside Commission for Scotland was here: CCS plaque, Eglinton Country Park, Ayrshire (Author's collection).