

Annwyl cyfeillion.

Nic Wheeler's invitation to appear here was flattering, but to find myself with three slots in the 24 hours is just a little daunting. At least I can celebrate in this one and deal with challenge and the future in the other two.

I would like to dedicate this contribution, in the first place, to three pillars of protected areas in Wales John Tudor, Merfyn Williams and Michael Griffith, all three gogledds. John was chairman of Snowdonia NPA, and the other two were CCW when I was, but they were all three many other things in and for Wales, as well. They are no longer with us, and all greatly missed.....

Well, 60 years in 20 minutes is a big ask. So Wordsworth, Addison, Scott, Dower, Hobhouse – the founding fathers get short shrift. They were all English, but remember that 63 years ago Clough Williams Ellis was a member of the Hobhouse Committee which turned Dowe's ideas into a workable system. The milestones of the six decades since them (which is all I can list in the time) are also all linked to personalities. Just remember that Attlee dealt with Scott and Dower because Churchill had a war on his hands, and it was very fitting therefore that Attlee and Lewis Silkin in 1949 saw the NP and Access to the C Act into law. The saddest thing about that Act is that Hob and Huxley had divided landscape from nature in the conservation stakes. 42 yrs later here in Wales, 43 in Scotland and 57 in England we joined them up again, if National Parks had been made nature conservation bases 60 yrs ago then we would have had 58 yrs practice behind us now and given 10 Acts of Parl affecting us in that time we might have got a really down to earth/close to the ground/near grassroots conservation operation going by now. As it is, we've most combined experience in Wales, perhaps by default in part (Scotland didn't have any NPs until 2002 and spent time working out what to do with its potential), and

England has only tried it for 3 years with limited success so far, one is loath to admit that Gummer in '91 may have been right).

60 years ago, 1949 was an exceptional year, Wolves won the Cup, the Morris Minor hit the streets, glass fronted boxes hit the sitting rooms, and I failed HSC – forerunner of A level. Oh and there was also a National Park and Access to the Countyside Act. They are connected! Legislators hadn't planned for any of them (watching the FA cup on the telly, cheap travel via the car, led to people in their millions watching TV series' promoting the outdoors and they chose to visit in their new cars) We've lived with the legacy ever since. But the Act is a veritable compendium of protective designations (National Parks, AONBs, Nature Reserves and Local Nature Reserves – note, no National Nature Reserves – Sites of Special Scientific Interest, Access Areas and Long Distance Paths) and duties about access (Inquiries and Definitive Maps) – though the former list is oddly disconnected, or where connections are noted they are negative ones. (AONB 'not being a NP', and SSSI, 'not being a NR') Some would use the word dustbin rather than compendium. Some of it took years to connect up, and some in my view has created difficulties for us (both CCW and NPAs) in its innocent laxity.

Anyway, the speed of preparation for National Parks in the '40s (42,45,47,49) was carried on by the new National Parks Commission (NPC) and National Parks were designated quite rapidly (despite dull Duff and tired Abrahams) from '51 on. The interesting thing about 1951 is that four National Parks were designated, BUT all with different (and sequentially weaker) forms of administration, or potential operation. The Peak District was first, a Joint Planning Board with its own staff; the Lakes next with a Joint Planning Board but no staff and County Councils controlling the budget; (following a general election & change of government: Macmillan) Snowdonia next, each county

doing its own thing with only a Joint Advisory Committee to help bind the Park, and Dartmoor was last with a Committee of the one CC involved.

For our purposes here, CCW's predecessor was the Nature Conservancy of January '49 (before the 49 Act gave it its tools); Pembrokeshire was 1952, Brecon '57 and Gower was the first AONB under the Act to be designated, in 1956. But after that among the list of major developments in NPs – Trawsfynydd and Ezzo, BP, Texaco in Milford Haven, are the Welsh examples of those things that loomed much larger than any obvious achievement in pursuit of the high-minded purposes of the founding fathers for the first 20 years. But, in Wales the pioneer work of interpretation at Broadhaven by John Barrett, and the initiation of what became the Plas Tan y Bwlch centre in Snowdonia set off that pursuit within that time frame.

Then, for NPs, came 1972 – the Local Government Act – when John Cripps and Reg Hookway (unsung heroes of the hour) grabbed an opportunity to begin to level the NP playing field. Still County Council committees, but each a 'senior' one of the County with the largest area of the Park. They would appoint their own chief officer, write an National Parks Plan and get 75% of their cash direct in the National Parks Supplementary Grant. All this while Lord Sandford (junior minister in DoE) considered National Park Policies. The whole package came into effect in April 1974 just as Sandford reported and the National Park Conference in May 74 in Malvern, precursor of the ANPA conferences and deliberately on neutral ground, was almost euphoric. (And memorable to new NPOs like me for one of those golden British moments. The Minister concerned was the football ref Dennis Howell and after he'd gone a civil servant (Scott Malden) in the baggy tweeds - rustic uniform of a mandarin let out of Whitehall - came to the front of the stage and said 'what the minister meant to say was...').

The CCW forerunners also evolved. In 1968 the National Parks Commission became the Countryside Commission, in 1973 Nature Conservancy escaped from under the 49 Act and became the National Conservancy Council with its own Act.

Well, the Gov. response to Sandford (Circular 4/76) first used the mnemonic 'NPA' – so the NPAs are of that vintage, 33 years old.....still youthful or at least not yet middle aged, even if they have seen more than 12 Acts of Parliament and Statutory Instruments since that have affected the process of pursuing the NP purposes, and CCW's inheritance.

They are: a 1979 SI when Ministry of Agriculture Fisheries and Food grants were changed (after Porchester) except in NPs; 1981 Wildlife & Countryside Act: the Broads experiment, Heseltine at Acle; SI - UMEX, 1988 Broads Act (3 purposes); (Common Land Forum and Countryside Policies Committee (Quicke). Then Mrs Thatcher responded to Rifkind's plea that he didn't control nature conservation in Scotland- (the Wogan and Bellamy crises!) and produced the 1990 Environment Act, which cancelled the NCC(GB)and invented CCW, and English Nature in 1991, (1992 Scottish Natural Heritage followed). (Expand on CCW, first Council, inherited dense map of PAs, 'our powerful eastern neighbour' in JNCC terms). 1991 Ron Edwards reported ("Fit for the Future") and Alun Michael handled the subsequent review which led to the 1995 Environment Act – which led to freestanding NPAs – and thus ANPA proper in 1996. Meantime TIR CYMEN, all that led to it, and all that followed. Indeed by 1996 I could write, in rebuttal of Ioan Bowen Rees – 'Beyond NPs' – that in 56% of Wales (via TC, NPs, ESAs, SSSIs) a farmer could be contracted to provide environmental goods, which meant that only 29% was not covered by such a potential.

I shifted from CCW to ANPA and you couldn't see the join. Some will remember John Tudor's impassioned plea (in the Green Dragon in Hereford) for E and W to hang together in the face of this new independence, indeed some thought that independence was going to be more draughty than others. Then came Countryside and Rights of Way Act and the NP(Scot) Acts in 2000, Loch Lomond and the Trossachs arrived in 2002, New Forest and Cairngorms in 2003, the Commons, and Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act s in 2006; now the South Downs (though it faces some risks: it's off the chalk and the size of the authority is daunting).

Given this recent flush, we ought to review the Wales situation. Dower drew a map of what we would now call areas of search (for NPs) – one bloc from Colwyn Bay/Clwdian to The Heads of the Valleys (with Gower, Pembs/Lleyn/Mon coasts and the Wye valley as outliers; he then named Brecon, Pembs and N Snowdonia as first choices, his reserves for NPs included Merionydd but across to Berwyn, Plynlimon, Radnor and Clun Forests, and the Elenydd (which he quaintly wrote as he heard it). And he finally listed Llyn and Ceredigion coasts, Denbigh moors, and Eppynt as well as our 5 AONBs as 'other amenity areas'. What is left ?! I am caused to recall Ioan Bowen Rees in 1995, when he advocated the abandonment of all designated areas in the interests of the conservation to the same standard of the whole of Wales (but then admitted to a need within that for 'national heritage areas' a la the minority report of the Sandford Committee). So as I said at the time.....we were not far apart. In Valhalla there is no need for NPs or NNRs or any other protection, for all is as it should be, all folk behave properly towards all parts of their habitat.

That is the last 60 yrs in Wales according to Mercer, but I can't leave this platform without a last harangue. It may be my last chance!

All the spatial protected areas are actually *man made* landscapes (the upland ones 5000 yrs ago) and have been man-sustained since then. We all need the men currently involved to stay at that maintenance – perhaps we should call it sustenance or sustaining, because that's more fashionable. (If you're a rather pure ecologist remember the mantra : THAT ALL ORGANISMS (man included) NEED HABITATS, BUT ALL HABITATS NEED LANDSCAPES TO SIT IN AND THUS ALL 3 NEED EACH OTHER (the recipe I used to try to convince my huge majority of nature conservation officer colleagues that they too needed to understand and deal in landscape scale conservation if biodiversity was to have its proper place in the optimum scheme of things).

The farmer-managers of the grazed landscapes we are charged to sustain provide at least 7 public goods (in the Adam Smith sense). They are: their own natural beauty and the visibility of it; easy access to it; a very visible ancient heritage; a contribution to overall biodiversity; a source of clean water and yet of flooding amelioration; a carbon store in peat and soil; and a contribution to the food chain and thus the nation's food security which was the managers' original purpose in any case. CCW and NPAs are the logical executive allies of their farmers, their farmers are the only potential managers of their landscapes, an alliance is critical to the future of these jewels in the national rural crown.

The protected area concept is the current crucible for the integrated management of the wildest country which alone provides the best of these vital public goods. There has to be a model for landscape management...why not CCW with NPA as agent, as model manager. It has taken 60 years for us to

become sophisticated enough to recognise that : - what we are doing, or at least what we should be capable of. The National Park farmers I know recognise that too. Mrs Becket didn't in England in the first year of this century as the perverse decision about the Single-Payment Scheme demonstrated. Does WAG know better?

We've served a long apprenticeship – we ought to, no, we better, between us, resolve to be the lead environmental journeymen of the next 60 years.