Opencast Mining and Quarrying

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Many people fear that opencast mining might increase now that the coal industry has been privatised, but the environmental requirements for granting planning permission have been strengthened. There is also concern about quarrying for aggregates.

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CONTENTS

I Introduction

Opencast mining is highly controversial. Its supporters see it as a cheap efficient way of mining coal or other essential minerals. Indeed, for coal, many would say that opencast is almost the only type of mining to make much economic sense. Its other products are less glamorous - notably sand and gravel - but essential for construction and road-building. Yet it has formidable critics. The main objection to opencast mining is its environmental impact. In the case of coal, this objection is strengthened by the fear that it is substituting for deep-mined coal.

This paper describes the issues involved and recent policy developments. 1994 saw new versions of the minerals planning guidance notes on opencast mining (MPG3) and on the provision of aggregates (MPG 6). In addition, it saw the sale of the British Coal regions. This sale included many potential opencast sites, without planning permission. These developments led to conflicting expectations over opencast mining. The new MPG3 places more emphasis on environmental requirements than its predecessor. The new MPG 6 included high estimates for requirements for aggregates and, therefore, created the presumption that quarrying for aggregates would increase. The privatisation of British Coal led to fears that planning permission would be granted for the sites which were sold, thereby leading to a dramatic increase in the level of opencast mining. That fear was combined with concern that opencast mining would substitute for the many deep mines which have been closed.

Why environmentalists tend to dislike opencast mining

The Council for the Protection of Rural England produced a *Campaigners' Guide to Opencast Coal Mining*, which summarises typical strong local objections to opencast coal mining (p.4).

> **Blasting** - Opencast mining usually requires the physical movement of large quantities of rock to gain access to relatively small amounts of coal. The rock above the coal can easily be loosened by blasting. This causes ground vibration and air over-pressure...Nuisance from blasting can easily be the most offensive aspect of open cast coal mining.
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> **Noise** - Most opencast mining requires heavy earth-moving machinery, which at major sites may be so large that it has to be assembled on the site before working can begin. This will be noisy in operation, with some vehicles such as draglines, dump trucks and scrapers causing particular problems. Generators, plant maintenance and, if undertaken on-site, coal washing can all be noisy. Some of the worst impacts are at the beginning and end of the mining process as soil is stripped or replaced and mounds placed or removed around the perimeter of the site...

> **Dust** - The initial soil movements on an opencast site should take place in dry weather to preserve as far as possible the structure of the soil. There is therefore an inevitable dust problem at this stage and on conclusion of working. Far more sustained, of course, is the dust emanating from the site as the rock is dug up and moved about. Dust suppression measures may help, such as sprinklers and wheel washing, but there can be no control over the prevailing wind and weather...
>
> **Visual Impact** - The appearance of the landscape during opencast coal working can be quite horrific as the countryside can be torn apart, and large sites may be scarred to a depth of hundreds of feet over hundreds of acres...Floodlighting and lights on moving plant - which swing like searchlights during the hours of darkness - can be especially upsetting features...
>
> **Lorries** - Often one of the worst problems associated with opencast coal mining is the lorry traffic removing coal to markets or to a "disposal point". This can extend the impact of opencasting far and wide from the excavation site...
>
> **Special Interests** - The substantial area of countryside which the industry occupies often means that special interests are threatened. These may well include nature conservation, enjoyment of footpaths and bridleways, archaeology, and historic buildings...
>
> **Community Life** - A ten year excavation of a site, which is fairly typical...extends over most of a child's schooling period and is likely to colour perceptions of what the countryside is and is for. A generation can experience the sensory deprivation of the assault on the local landscape, as buildings, trees, boundaries, habitats, archaeology, historical remains and the immeasurable reminders of past experience are lost forever.

A study commissioned by the Department of the Environment[1], considers the relative importance of the problems (p.8), before going on to recommend codes of good practice to alleviate them.

> "Taking a "global" view, the main concerns and problems are, in broadly descending order or importance：
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> > the various effects of road traffic, which create almost universal difficulties when this is the primary means of transport;
> >
> > at a similar level, but more selectively according to type of mineral and amount of overburden, the effects of blasting, noise and dust;
> >
> > visual/landscape effects, which produce more objections at the planning stage but fewer complaints during operation;
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> > contamination of surface water discharges by solids is relatively common, contamination by oil and its derivatives is less frequent; dewatering also creates difficulties with derogation of wells and streams, over-drainage and occasionally settlement.

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[1] Environmental Effects of Surface Mineral Workings, 1992

> "Other issues, ie wastes, and effects on archaeology, agriculture and forestry, ecology, whilst they are potentially important issues, are not usually the subject of public complaint to Mineral Planning Authorities (MPAs) or to local authorities. There is less reference to such problems in the literature and it is unclear how frequently they occur. They are nonetheless of serious concern to MPAs, the National Rivers Authority, English Nature, Countryside Council for Wales and other such interested bodies."

The dislike of opencast mining is not confined to pressure groups or local residents. *The Flowers Report on Coal and the Environment*[2], written by the Commission on Energy and the Environment (a distinguished committee of experts appointed by the Government), was highly critical of opencast mining. The Commission's recommendation that opencast mining applications should go through the normal planning system has since been accepted. The Commission went further (para 11.82), writing at a time when heavy British Coal losses on deep mines were balanced by considerable profits on opencast operations.

> "It was suggested in the evidence that the environmental consequences of opencast mining are so serious that the only way to prevent irreparable damage is to reduce substantially annual levels of production. We do not believe it would be right to cut the volume arbitrarily in view of the severe implications for the financial viability of the NCB's overall activities...We strongly recommend that as older, more unprofitable and less environmentally acceptable deep mines are closed and more efficient and profitable operations take their place, the volume of opencast mining should be allowed to decline. In the meantime, there should be no increase in the present target of 15 million tonnes per year. The uniquely sensitive character of the British countryside and the high population density in much of the country would not be able to accommodate, without unwarrantable damage, a target in excess of that level."

This approach has certainly not been followed. Opencast output has often passed 18 m tonnes a year, despite closure of the inefficient deep mines. Since 1992, the deep mining sector has been much depleted but the opencast sector has declined a little reaching 16.6 m (provisional figures) for 1994. With coal privatisation, of course, the whole idea of justifying opencast mining so as to help the finances of British Coal came to an end. The following table shows the rise in opencast output.

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[2] HMSO 1981

UK Opencast Coal Production (thousand tonnes)

1960	7,674
1965	7,450
1970	7,885
1975	10,414
1980	15,779
1985	15,569
1990	18,134
1994	16,616 (provisional)

Source : DTI[3]

The Trade and Industry Select Committee[4] also recommended a sharp reduction, using slightly different arguments.

> **157.** Opencast output will continue to be necessary to British Coal for blending and for financial reasons, but not all the present output is needed for blending, and the financial advantage of opencast over deep mining is declining. We would not support a change in opencast output which was too drastic and sudden for the companies dependent on it to adapt, but, in view of the environmental disadvantages, we would favour a somewhat steeper reduction than British Coal currently projects, perhaps to 10 million tonnes a year...**We recommend that the planning guidance relating to opencast mining be changed to restrict consents to sites where there are clear benefits, either locally in terms of reclaiming derelict land or to the nation through making available particular qualities of coal and thus helping the coal industry. We also recommend that British Coal or the proposed "coal reserves authority" use their control over licences to bring about a reduction in opencast output.**

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[3] DTI *Digest of UK Energy Statistics 1994*; DTI *Energy Trends*, March 1995

[4] *British Energy Policy and the Market for Coal*, HC 237 1992/93 para 157

The advantages of opencast mining

Supporters of opencast mining see it as a cheap, sensible way to mine coal and stress the enormous achievements of British Coal in site reclamation. The profitability of opencast is undeniable. The *1993/94 British Coal Statement of Accounts*[5] showed deep mines with an operating profit of £1.57 per saleable tonne. That was an enormous achievement, after closure of less profitable mines and huge productivity improvements. Yet the same report shows opencast mining with an operating profit per saleable tonne of £5.95. Although the opencast output was much lower (13.5 m tonnes as compared with 42.3 m tonnes for deep mined coal) the opencast operating profit was actually higher, at £80 m compared to £66 m. Other years show a different, balance with deep mining making £341m profit in 1992/93, and opencast making £160 m. The contrast between deep mining and opencast is not so stark as when Flowers compared large losses on deep mining balanced by large profits of opencast. However, opencast seems consistently profitable. In addition, whereas deep mining requires the opening of new mines after a time, opencast output can easily be expanded if the suitable permission is granted.

British Coal Opencast considered that view most unfair, emphasising the successes of land reclamation after the end of opencast mining. They particularly reject a common description of their reclamation efforts as "a predominantly bland and featureless landscape for many years, and a permanent loss of character". That phrase has been quoted and requoted, but originally came from a planning inspector's report referring to a collection of nearby opencast sites, and arguing that so many opencast sites so close together could not be absorbed by the countryside without much detriment. The comment referred particularly to Bowsers Hole, of which the official opencast history[6] commented :

> "Bowsers Hole site was, in fact, a predominantly bland and featureless landscape prior to opencasting. Even the opencast industry cannot work miracles."

Most of the defence of reclamation relies upon photographs, which could not be reproduced in sufficient quality in this paper, but there is widespread respect for the quality of reclamation that has followed opencast mining. The sites have normally been restored to agricultural use, but more may now be restored to recreational use. The plans for a new National Forest rely heavily upon the reclamation of land after the extensive opencast mining undertaken in the Midlands. Reclaimed sites might contain noisy motor sports as well as woodland.

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[5] page 32

[6] P.Grimshaw,*Opencast Coalmining in Britain 1942-1992*, (British Coal Opencast 1992, p.36)

II. Is the new Planning Guidance (MPG 3) more environmentally friendly ?

The 1994 version has widely been considered to take a more environmental attitude towards the granting of permission for opencast mining. That interpretation relates more to the detail rather than the general statement of policy.

The 1988 version certainly referred to the environment in its early paragraphs.

> "**2** Opencast coal is an important national resource. The Government recognises this and also recognises that proposals for opencast operations need to be considered with full regard to their potential environmental effects and the scope for mitigating those effects, including the satisfactory restoration of the site. It is therefore essential to strike the right balance between the nation's interest in exploiting this mineral resource and that or protecting the environment.
>
> "**12** The Government also recognises the impact opencast coal mining can have on a locality. Environmental controls are vital to the acceptability of opencast coal working and must be adhered to if sites are to meet current environmental standards. However, even with the best practicable environmental controls there may be cases where the impact would be such that development should not be permitted."

The 1994 version places opencast mining in the context of sustainable development.

> "**1** The Government believes that coal which can be mined economically in an environmentally acceptable way remains an important indigenous resource...
>
> "**7** The Government recognises that coal extraction and colliery spoil disposal can have a significant environmental impact and often take place in areas of attractive countryside. The UK Strategy for Sustainable Development[7] said that, while very large quantities of mineral resources exist and it may be very unlikely that there will be a problem of physical exhaustion of resources, it is becoming increasingly difficult to find sites that can be worked without damaging the environment to an extent that people find unacceptable."

The 1994 version is stricter on developments in national parks and other sensitive areas. The 1988 version (paras 13 and 14) notes merely that

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[7] Cm 2426 - January 1994

> "proposals for new mineral workings or extensions of existing workings affecting National Parks should be subject to the most rigorous examination...Proposals in Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, National Nature Reserves and Sites of Special Scientific Interest should also be subject to a more rigorous examination."

The 1994 version states (para 47) that major developments should not take place in National Parks or AONBs save in exceptional circumstances. Proposals in SSSIs and NNRs should be subject to the most rigorous examination.

Further rules are laid down for Special Protection Areas (SPAs) and Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) in Planning Policy Guidance 9 on *Nature Conservation*[8]. The decision-taker (whether Secretary of State or the local planning authority) must first assess whether the proposed development will affect he integrity of the site, in terms of the reasons for which it was classified. If so, then planning permission should only be granted in certain closely defined circumstances. First, there must be no alternative solutions. Second, if the site does not host a priority natural habitat type or species defined in the Habitats Directive, permission can only be granted if the proposed development has to be carried out for imperative reasons of overriding public interest. If the site hosts a priority habitat or species, and there is no alternative solution, the only considerations which can justify the grant of planning permission are those which relate to human health, public safety or beneficial consequences to the environment - unless the European Commission considers that there are other issues of overriding public interest. These are apparently very strict criteria. However, the imperative reasons of overriding public interest explicitly include those of a social or economic nature. Presumably that could include the provision of work in an area of high unemployment, or perhaps the provision of aggregates necessary for the construction industry. Until case law develops, it is always difficult to know how strict such conditions will prove in practice.

In addition, the 1994 version of MPG 3 pays much more attention to ancient monuments and archaeological sites, than the 1988 version.

The 1994 version (para 57) quotes the environmental duty in Section 54 of the Coal Industry Act 1994. Para 58 states that the Secretaries of State attach great importance to the effective discharge of these duties.

The section on specific impacts is greatly expanded in the 1994 version and transferred to a special annex. Almost throughout, the direction is towards tighter restrictions. For example,

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[8] October 1994

on blasting, the 1988 version is sensible but gives limited guidance to planning authorities for action[9].

> "If a planning authority is considering imposing planning conditions to protect the surrounding areas from blasting they should consult HM Inspectorate of Mines and Quarries since it is important to ensure the planning conditions are not at variance with good and safe practice under the Mines and Quarries Legislation."

The 1994 version is much longer. It repeats the 1988 recommendation to consult but goes on to specify specific actions both for the mineral planing authority (MPA) and the industry. The MPA part is more specific as to what might be done.

> D17. MPAs should therefore consider the need to agree or specify planning conditions relating to the :
>
> > levels of ground vibration and overpressure to meet the 95% confidence level, monitored over an appropriate period,
> >
> > prohibition of the use of surface detonating cord and plaster blasting
> >
> > control of flyrock, after advice from the Health and Safety Executive.

III. Will Coal Privatisation result in more opencast mining?

The Government gave a general statement of its policy on opencast mining in the March 1993 White Paper[10]. The idea of a limit on the volume of opencast mining or a target for it was rejected.

> "**13.33** It will remain a matter for British Coal to decide the level of output for which it wishes to aim in any period in the light of market conditions. Similarly, it will be for current or prospective developers in the licensed sector, in the light of their own business plans, to decide the level of output for which they wish to aim."

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[9] Appendix A para 7

[10] *The Prospects for Coal : Conclusions of the Government's Coal Review* (Cm 2235)

The volume of opencast mining, therefore, depends upon the result of many independent planning applications. The results should be determined by Minerals Planning Guidance Note 3, discussed in the previous section. To the extent that this is more environmental than its predecessor, there might be less opencast mining, but it is possible that the new approach could be reflected in tighter environmental conditions rather than actual refusal of planning permission.

Towards the end of 1994, there was considerable concern and publicity about a "proposed six-fold increase in opencast coalmines". This is apparently based on a slight misunderstanding. The main privatisation included the deep mines and also opencast areas. In addition to the operating opencast sites, the five regional companies include "portfolios of prospective opencast sites. These are at different stages in the processes of assembling the necessary interests and rights in and over land and of obtaining planning and other consents, all of which are necessary for the extraction of coal"[11] . A full list of these sites is included in the Annex to this paper.

The fact that they are sold as opencast sites in the privatisation does not imply anything about the likelihood of production taking place. On the assumption that all the sites were quickly developed and given planning permission, there would be a sharp increase in the level of opencast mining, but there is no particular reason to expect that to happen. Even on extreme assumptions, a six-fold increase would be unlikely. Planning permission is required and the revision of the mineral planning guidance note (MPG 3) in the summer made more explicit the requirement to take account of environmental factors. A Government statement[12] described what it considers the acceptable balance.

> "The Government wishes to see the development of the largest economically viable coal industry for the longer term within its broad objectives of encouraging competition, promoting economic growth and assisting the creation and maintenance of employment. This must, of course, be consistent with land use planning criteria, and the best way of striking this balance between the economic importance of this indigenous energy resource and the protection of the environment is through the careful consideration of individual applications within the framework of the development plan led system.
>
> "The Government's policy is that where the development can be carried out in an environmentally acceptable way and consistent with the principles of sustainable development, there is no case, in land use planning terms, for placing more restrictions on coal extraction and colliery spoil disposal than are necessary to ensure full and proper protection of the environment."

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[11] *DTI Press Release* 12 October 1994
[12] *DOE News Release* 28 June 1994

However, there is no doubt that concern has been expressed in some quarters at the sale of sites where local authorities would oppose opencast mining. The following article[13] is an example.

> "Threats of increased opencast mining in and around a South Durham town have prompted warnings of pollution and unacceptable damage to the landscape. Shildon Town Council is demanding a say in whether opencast mining is allowed to go ahead, after news that five sites rejected for opencasting by Durham county councillors could be revived when the coal industry is privatised."

The trend in opencast mining output until privatisation has been gently downwards, with production declining from 18.6 m tonnes in 1991 to 18.2 m tones in 1992, 17.0 m tonnes in 1993 and 16.6 m tonnes (provisional) in 1994[14].

IV The requirement for Aggregates

The use of aggregates has been increasing steadily. The 1989 version of Minerals Planning Guidance Note 6[15] opened with a description of increases up to that date.

> "**1** In 1985, approximately 191 million tonnes (mt) of crushed rock, sand and gravel were used as construction aggregates in England and Wales. In 1986, the figure had risen to about 202mt. Aggregates production is now at a level approaching that which prevailed in the early 1970s. It is estimated to rise to 225mt by 1995 and 245 by 2005."

This Note was revised in April 1994, quoting estimates by Cambridge Econometrics (para 22) produced in 1991 and revised downwards by 10% in 1992 to take account of the recession. Nevertheless, these figures still show a remarkable increase in their predictions since they "now indicate that primary aggregates demand in England and Wales could be between 370 and 440 million tonnes a year (mtpa) by 2011." Although the Government is encouraging the recycling of aggregates, it is clear that considerable quarrying will be required to satisfy the demand.

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[13] *Northern Echo* 14 November 1994
[14] *Energy Trends*, March 1995 Table 4
[15] Guidelines for Aggregates Provision in England

The Government's announcement[16] of the revised MPG6 emphasised its concern to limit the environmental consequences of this increased demand.

> "To help achieve a more sustainable approach, we are reducing the landbank (the amount of land won material [sand and gravel] with planning consent at any one time) from 10 to 7 years. An assured supply of aggregates for construction is a basic requirement of a healthy economy. But sustainable development means that we must reduce our very high dependence on primary aggregates and make more use of substitutes such as secondary and recycled material. We need to seek better patterns of supply and use of resources, and more environmentally acceptable ways of working mineral sites and restoring these sites once work has ceased.
>
> "As a first step in achieving this, industry is being asked to reduce its dependence on land won aggregates from 83% to 68% by 2006. Provision of sand and gravel in the south-east will be 10% less than that envisaged for the same 15 year period in the current MPG6 guidelines, published in 1989. Industry is asked to increase its use of secondary and recycled materials by 100%..."

One possible development to cope with this demand is the use of coastal superquarries. The idea is popular with the industry, because there are economies of scale in the use of equipment in a superquarry. There are also environmental advantages in being able to transport the aggregates by sea. However, those living near the quarry site are often less enthusiastic. There has been considerable controversy over a plan to have a superquarry on the Isle of Harris. A long inquiry is expected to end in June 1995, and a decision will have to be taken by the Secretary of State for Scotland. Redland Aggregates Ltd has plans for a £70 million project to remove 600,000 tons of anorthosite from Lingerbay, over a period of sixty years. Environmentalists dislike the way that a whole mountain will disappear, while many locals are more interested in the prospects for employment. Plans have recently been unveiled for a second superquarry on the island, an indication of the extent of activity to be expected if approval is granted.

V New Quarrying from old permissions (including Interim Development Orders)

One particular cause of concern comes when quarrying for minerals takes place under a permission granted decades ago. Operations may have ended many years ago, but then be re-started. This can happen even in National Parks, despite local opposition, and the threat of further mineral working will remain for decades to come.

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[16] *DOE News Release* 13 April 1994

Interim Development Orders (IDOs) provided the earliest form of planning permission granted on application, predating the *Town & Country Planning Act 1947*. Permissions applied for and granted on or after 23 July 1943 and before 1 July 1948 remain valid. Many problems were attached to them, although the Government has made some changes in the position over the past few years. Permissions were granted, particularly before the *Town and Country Planning (General Interim Development) Order 1946*, which would not be granted under more recent legislation. There were few if any environmental conditions attached to these permissions. There were also few records, so people buying property in later years were often unaware of the proximity of the permissions. To complicate matters, dormant permissions could be reactivated without warning.

Many environmentalists wanted and still want to revoke all such permissions, leaving the holders to reapply according to modern criteria if they so choose. The Government has not adopted this policy, largely because the holders of planning permission to quarry have an asset whose removal would require considerable compensation. The *Town and Country Planning (Minerals) Act 1981* placed a duty on mineral planning authorities to review all mineral sites in their area and to consider making orders updating permissions to modern standards where appropriate. This was intended to deal with all old permissions, both IDO permissions and other early permissions.

However, a decade later, the Government decided that progress under this legislation was too slow and went further. In 1991[17] new measures were announced.

> "The measures we have introduced with effect from 25 September 1991 require holders of such permissions to apply to the mineral planning authority for registration of the permission by 25 March 1992, or the permission will cease to have effect. If the application is approved, an application for determination of operating and restoration conditions must be made within 12 months.
>
> "If the permission is currently inactive (that is, no working has been carried out to any substantial extent between 1 May 1989 and 30 April 1991) , working may not recommence until an application for registration has been made and approved, and a scheme of operating and restoration conditions has been approved by the mineral planning authority."

Basically the current position is that these old, dormant, planning permissions for quarrying can still be reactivated but the quarrying should be undertaken in a way that conforms with modern environmental standards.

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[17] *DOE News Release* 1 October 1991

In 1994, the Government consulted on *The reform of Old Mineral Permissions 1948-1981*[18], where the proposals basically would involve extending to post 1948 permissions the requirement already in force for pre-1948 permissions of compliance with modern environmental standards. A report was issued on the consultation process in January 1995[19]. The Government's intentions were announced during the Lords stages of the Environment Bill, and they will be implemented in amendments when the Bill comes to the Commons. Viscount Ullswater[20] explained the plans.

> "First, they will require the initial updating of planning permissions where the predominant planning permission was granted before 22nd February 1982. We intend to make a distinction between "dormant" sites - that is, sites where no development has taken place to any substantial extent for a number of years - and "active sites" - that is, sites which are currently operating or where working has been only temporarily suspended in recent years.
>
> "To spread the workload, we intend that active sites should be reviewed in two consecutive phases, dealing with the oldest sites first...Mineral planning authorities would be required to compile lists of sites, specifying in which phase active sites would be reviewed and the date by which the owner or operator must submit a scheme of updated planning conditions for the authority's approval. If no scheme was submitted the permission would fall. Dormant sites would not be allowed to recommence working until a new scheme of conditions had been approved.
>
> "This broadly follows the approach we adopted for interim development orders."

No change is to be made in the date for the termination of the pre-1981 consents, which remains, as for the pre-1948 consents, the year 2042. The Minister argued that the other measures, requiring an updating of permissions on working sites within six years, and a prohibition on the re-opening of dormant sites, would be enough to minimise any problems caused by the end date (c.135).

VI National Parks and Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs)

Many people find it paradoxical that quarrying is allowed on a large scale in national parks, particularly via old permissions. A study commissioned by the Council for the National Parks[21] recommended the revocation of existing permissions in these areas without

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[18] Library Deposited Paper 10,717, March 1994
[19] Library Deposited Paper 3/924
[20] HL Deb 7 March 1995 c.134
[21] *Natural Assets : mineral working in National Parks,* Green Balance, 1993

compensation. It called for a review of permitted development rights under which quarrying could extend to a much larger scale than that expected when the original permissions were granted. Existing permissions should be terminated after ten years and new ones should be limited to 15 years, unless otherwise agreed, permitting review of the conditions without compensation at frequent intervals.

This view is very different from that of the Government as recorded in the recent consultation exercise, which has consistently argued against any special provision to revoke the planning permissions in these areas. Paragraph 26 and 29 of the 1994 consultation paper state the Government's views on National Parks and SSSIs.

> "For National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, the existence of a mineral permission would have been taken into account at the time of designation. Equally, permissions granted after designation would have taken account of the existence of National Park or AONB status. Moreover, mineral working in such areas does not necessarily imply lasting damage particularly in the site is operated to modern standards and is properly restored once operations cease. The Government therefore sees no case for revoking mineral permissions in these areas without compensation.

> "Where notification of an SSSI takes place after planning permission has been granted notification will have been based solely on nature conservation interest. The existence of a mineral permission does not prevent notification of an SSSI and equally notification does not invalidate the planning permission. The public interest in which should take precedence will vary from case to case. The Government sees no case for blanket revocation of mineral permissions in SSSIs, nor for allowing restrictions on working rights to be imposed without compensation. Each case should therefore be decided on its merits under the general framework for review proposed above. Nevertheless, the Government proposes to issue guidance encouraging the industry to reassess the effect of their operations on nature conservation interests."

Annex

List of Sites of Prospective Opencast Mining which do not have planning permission, sold with the Privatisation of the Coal Industry[22].

Central South Regional Coal Company

Anker West	4km E of Tamworth, Staffordshire.
Ashby Woulds (Group)	5km SE of Swadlincote, Derbyshire.
Biddulph South	8km N of Stoke-on-Trent, Staffordshire.
Bleak House Extension	5km E of Cannock, Staffordshire.
Bleak House Residual	9.5km WNW of Lichfield, Staffordshire.
Bunkerhill	2.5km W of Ilkeston, Derbyshire.
Coalfield West (Revised)	3km SW of Coalville, Leicestershire.
Forge & Monument Restoration	5km SSE of Alfreton, Derbyshire.
Great Oak	6km NW of Newcastle under Lyme, Staffordshire.
Mead	2.5km SW of Heanor, Derbyshire.
Orchard	Immediately E of Dordon, Warwickshire.
Robbinetts	8km W of Nottingham, Nottinghamshire.
Robbinetts Remainder	9km WNW of Nottingham, Nottinghamshire.
Shortwood Revised	4km W of Telford town centre, Shropshire.
Yorks Bridge	2km W of Brownhills, Staffordshire.

[22] Library Deposited Paper 3/677 November 1994

Anker East	3km NE of Tamworth, Staffordshire.
Merelake Road Staffordshire.	7.5km NW of Newcastle under Lyme,
Midland	3km N of Alfreton, Derbyshire.
Sandy Lane	12km NW of Nuneaton, Warwickshire.
Shipley West	3km WNW of Ilkeston, Derbyshire.
Sporton East	3.Skm NE of Alfreton, Derbyshire.
Steadmill West	4km N of Ripley, Derbyshire.
Swepstone Lane	lkm E of Measham, Leicestershire.

Central North Regional Coal Company

Anglers East	8km SE of Wakefield, West Yorkshire.
Eldon Deep	3km SE of Bishop Auckland, County Durham.
Gawber	3km NW of Barnsley, South Yorkshire.
Herrington Colliery	7km SW of Sunderland, Tyne & Wear.
Hilltop West	3.Skm WSW of Shildon, County Durham.
Hilltop Revised II	2km SW of Shildon, County Durham.
Hoodcroft	4km N of Bolsover, Derbyshire.
Lomax (Revised)	6km S of Bolton, Greater Manchester.
White Lea	2.Skm NW of Crook, County Durham.
Windsor	4km NE of Dewsbury, West Yorkshire.
Anglers South	7.5km SE of Wakefield, West Yorkshire.
Anglers South-West	8km SE of Wakefield, West Yorkshire.

Campbell	3km NW of Staveley, Derbyshire.
Castle Dene	4km SE of Consett, County Durham.
Deanfield	4.5km ESE of Wakefield, West Yorkshire.
Dicconson Lane	Skm E of Wigan, Greater Manchester.
Eldon Hope West	4km E of Bishop Auckland, County Durham.
Furlong	12.5km ESE of Barnsley, South Yorkshire.
Gold East	3km NNE of Staveley, Derbyshire.
High Moor Colliery	14km SE of Sheffield, South Yorkshire.
Horsegate	14km W of Gateshead, Tyne & Wear.
Houghton Main	7.5km E of Barnsley, South Yorkshire.
Hurbuck	5km SE of Consett, County Durham/ Gateshead MBC.
Kilnhurst	5km NE of Rotherham, South Yorkshire.
Lewden	4km SE of Barnsley, South Yorkshire.
Marley Hill(Revised)	lkm SW of Sunniside, Tyne & Wear.
New Row	Skm SE of Barnsley, South Yorkshire.
Pinnock	2km NE of Staveley, Derbyshire.
Randolph	2km SW of West Auckland, County Durham.
Shafton Green	6km NE of Barnsley, South Yorkshire.
Stainsby Bank	8km NW of Durham, County Durham.
Stockley Hill	3.5km NW of Wigan, Greater Manchester.
Stoney Heap	15km NW of Durham, County Durham.
Two Gates	6km NE of Barnsley, South Yorkshire.
Waterfall	8km SSE of Barnsley, South Yorkshire.

Wellsthorpe	2.Skm E of Staveley, Derbyshire.
Westthorpe Colliery	12km SE of Sheffield, South Yorkshire.
Whittonstall	5km NW of Consett, County Durham.
Woodhead	6km N of Consett, County Durham.

North East Regional Coal Company

Bothal Burn	5km NE of Morpeth, Northumberland.
Potland Burn	6km NE of Morpeth, Northumberland.
Brenkley	10km **N** of Newcastle upon Tyne.
Dewley Hill	8km WNW of Newcastle upon Tyne.
Hathery Lane	2km W of Blyth, Northumberland.
Maiden's Hall	13km NNE of Morpeth, Northumberland.
Stobswood Extension	8km NNE of Morpeth, Northumberland.
Highthorn	llkm NE of Morpeth, Northumberland.
Steadsburn	llkm NNE of Morpeth, Northumberland.

Scottish Regional Coal Company

Broken Cross and Broken Cross Ext. Region	7Km SSW of Lanark, Clydesdale District,
Chalmerston North	5km NNE of Dalmellington, Cumnock & Doon Valley District, Strathclyde Region.
Drumshangie	3.2km NE of Airdrie, Monklands District, Strathclyde Region
Greenbank	Skm NNE of Dunfermline, Dunfermline District, Fife Region.
House of water	8km SSW of Cumnock, Cumnock & Doon Valley District, Strathclyde Region.

Ladylands	9km ENE of Motherwell, Motherwell District, Strathclyde Region.
Leadloch	16km E of Motherwell, Motherwell District, Strathclyde Region.
Powharnal	9km NE of Cumnock, Cumnock & Doon Valley District, Strathclyde Region.
Spireslack Revised	20km ENE of Cumnock, Cumnock & Doon Valley District, Strathclyde Region.
Aitkenhead	5km ENE of Alloa, Central Region.
Gasswater	6km NE of Cumnock, Strathclyde Region.
Glenmuckloch	15km ESE of Cumnock, Dunfries & Galloway Region.
Glentaggart	18km SW of Lanark, Strathclyde Region.
Grievehill	8km SE of Cumnock, Strathclyde Region.
Pennyvenie	2km NE of Dalmellington, Strathclyde Region.
Watsonhead	12km NNW of Lanark, Strathclyde Region.
Wilsontown	13km NE of Lanark, Strathclyde Region.

Welsh Regional Coal Company

East Pit East	llkm E of Ammanford, Dyfed.
Glanstony	8km WNW of Llanelli, Dyfed.
Kenfig	6km NW of Bridgend, Mid Glamorgan.
Nant Gyrlais	16km NE of Neath, West Glamorgan.
Pwll Bach Colliery	13km N of Neath, West Glamorgan.
Rock Castle West	5km WNW of Ammanford, Dyfed.
Tir Dafydd	4km NW of Ammanford, Dyfed.

Abercrave West	15km NNE of Neath, West Glamorgan.
Aqueduct	3km S of Blaenavon, Gwent.
Colliers Row	lkm W of Merthyr Tydfil, Mid Glamorgan.
Fernbank	7km ENE of Bridgend, Mid Glamorgan.
Nant Llesg	5km E of Merthyr Tydfil, Mid Glamorgan.
St John's Colliery	llkm NNE of Bridgend, Mid Glamorgan.