

DESIGNATION HISTORY SERIES

COTSWOLDS AONB

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VOLUME I

**History with References, List of Files consulted
and Maps**



COTSWOLDS AONB

Origin

1. The Government first considered the setting up of National Parks and other similar areas in England and Wales in 1929 when the Prime Minister, Ramsay MacDonald, established a National Park Committee, chaired by the Rt. Hon. Christopher Addison MP, MD. The "Addison" Committee¹ reported to Government in 1931, and, surprisingly, the Report showed that the only part of the extensive area of the Cotswold Hills put forward by eminent witnesses for consideration by the Committee was the Broadway - Chipping Campden - Stanton area. This area had been suggested by Raymond Unwin, a pioneer town and country planner, on behalf of the Art Workers' Guild. Significantly, in view of the eventual designation of the Cotswolds as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty some 35 years later, Unwin had suggested that the Addison Committee ought not merely to envisage the protection of wild land, but also the conservation also of historic villages and typical pieces of scenery, putting forward the "reservation" of the Chipping Campden - Broadway and Stanton area of the Cotswolds as just such an area.
2. No National Parks or similar areas were established as a result of the Addison Report - the Government was clearly preoccupied with dealing with the effects of the Great Depression as was also the famous author and social commentator, J. B. Priestley, witnessed by perhaps his finest and most influential work "English Journey"². However, "English Journey" contained much more than just a moving description of the "North - South" social and economic divide, for it also demonstrated Priestley's fine eye for scenery and his love of the English landscape. Two areas of the countryside, the Isle of Wight and the Cotswolds, were identified, in passing, by Priestley, as areas which should be protected for the future as "sorts of national parks". In the present case of the Cotswolds he argued persuasively that its "exquisite countryside" should be regarded as "a national heritage of great value" controlled by "the commonwealth" and nation, but not so people who worked the land would be turned away. He saw the Cotswolds as a countryside which would refresh the mind and spirit and one which needed protection for the good of future generations. With Priestley's words on the need for future protection of Cotswolds, in which he was clearly influenced by members of the Art Workers' Guild, like F. L. Griggs, the artist, he was presaging the future, for many would argue that the eventual designation of the Cotswolds as an AONB in 1966 meant that most of his stated aims for the area had been met. Priestley did not die till 1984, but as far as the author of this history is aware, he made no public comment on what he felt about the Government confirming the designation of the area as an AONB in 1966, though, in a national context, it seems most likely that he would have welcomed the spirit behind the designation provisions contained in the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act, 1949 (The 1949 Act).
3. Priestley's prophetic words on the Cotswolds apart, the lack of Government action following the Addison Report did lead to more focussed action on National Parks by other bodies, with the setting up of the Standing Committee on National Parks

(SCNP) by the Council for the Preservation of Rural England (CPRE) and the Council for the Preservation of Rural Wales (CPRW), which advanced well-argued proposals on National Parks ("The Case for National Parks in Great Britain"³), to Government in 1938. Importantly for the future, John Dower, an architect/planner, was the Drafting Secretary of SCNP's publication. War intervened, but Government and its Committee on Land Utilisation in Rural Areas (1942), chaired by Lord Justice Scott, were clearly influenced by SCNP's campaign, requesting John Dower to prepare an official report on National Parks in England and Wales. Dower's Report⁴ published in 1945, included "The Cotswolds" in his Division C List, "Other Amenity Areas" NOT suggested as National Parks. These areas (which included other areas like the Mendips and the Bowland Fells) had been put forward as areas of landscape beauty which merited some form of national protection in the future, and many of them provided the basis for the 52 conservation areas of "high landscape quality, scientific interest and recreational value", listed in the July 1947 Report of the National Parks Committee⁵, established by Government as a consequence of the Dower Report and chaired by Sir Arthur Hobhouse.

4. Hobhouse's Cotswolds Conservation Area (Map 1 in this history) covered 660 square miles of the Oolitic limestone hills and valleys mainly in Gloucestershire, but extended over much smaller parts of Somerset, Worcestershire, Warwickshire, Oxfordshire and Wiltshire. In landscape character the area was varied with steep slopes, often in limestone grassland and beech/oak woodland on the western scarp and the sides of the many incised valleys or combs, contrasting with the open and gentler dip-slope country, generally in arable farming. Despite these variations the use of the grey-yellow oolitic limestone as a building material for the area's drystone walls, and buildings, in farm, village and small town, provided an underlying visual unity for the area, which in the eyes of many, including J. B. Priestley, was the finest and most quintessential English cultural landscape. In extent it was broadly comparable with Dower's Cotswolds as shown on the much smaller scale map (Map II) in the Dower Report⁴. Hobhouse had excluded the western outlier of Bredon Hill from his conservation area (as had Dower from his Cotswolds proposal), and in general terms the western boundary followed the foot of Cotswold scarp, except in the Stroud area, where the boundary was clearly drawn to exclude the town and the semi-industrialised deep valley to the south. The conservation area extended as far south as the northern outskirts of Bath, just in the County of Somerset. The eastern boundary broadly marked the transition from the edge of the dip slope of the Oolitic limestone to the edge of the Upper Thames Clay Vales, taking in areas of Wiltshire and Oxfordshire, but excluding the large Cotswold stone built towns of Cirencester and Witney. To the north-west of Witney, Hobhouse's boundary ceased to be geological, and followed the Oxford-Evesham railway line, and thus excluded the ironstone hills of northern Oxfordshire. Near Kingham, Hobhouse's boundary swung directly north to a northern extremity, the outliers of Meon Hill and the Hill south-west of Ilmington, in Warwickshire. From Meon Hill the boundary rejoined the main Cotswold Scarp in Gloucestershire, also taking in the village of Broadway and its Hill, within a narrow salient of the County of Worcestershire.

5. As a Hobhouse conservation area, "the Cotswolds" was included in the list of areas, on which, as had been made clear during the passage of the National Parks and

Access to the Countryside Bill through Parliament in 1949, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs) would be largely, though not entirely, based.

Designation History - I The Cotswolds AONB (Designation) Order 1966

6. **Early Steps.** The immediate priority of the National Parks Commission (NPC), established under the 1949 Act and first chaired by Sir Patrick Duff, was to designate the National Parks in its programme which had been adopted from the Hobhouse Report. Once the National Park programme was well advanced, the NPC (chaired by Lord Strang from March 1954) were able to give their early consideration to an AONB designation programme, in papers in April and June 1954, when three areas, Gower, the Surrey Hills, and Lleyn (and later the Quantocks) became the first tranche of proposed AONBs. The Cotswolds was not given such early consideration, and only when the Gloucestershire Branch of the Council for the Preservation of Rural England (CPRE) requested the NPC to support their 2 March 1957 resolution⁶ to designate the Cotswolds in Gloucestershire, as an AONB, to prevent further disfiguring developments in the area, did the NPC consider the Cotswolds as a possible candidate for the immediate AONB programme. However, following a decision⁷ by the NPC's Committee B, at their meeting on 26 March 1957, the Hon. Secretary of CPRE Gloucestershire, Mr W. H. Giffard, was sent a letter⁸, of 5 April 1957, informing him that while the NPC were sympathetic to CPRE's proposal, the scale of the current AONB programme would not allow consideration of including the Cotswolds in the programme for some time. Despite this discouraging reply CPRE Gloucestershire still continued to promote the proposal locally, causing the National Farmers' Union (NFU) Gloucestershire Branch to request⁹, in October 1957, Harold Abrahams, the NPC Secretary (the famous Olympic athlete had been recruited, in 1950, as the NPC's first Secretary) to address farmers on the implications, for them, of the AONB proposal. Although Harold Abrahams believed such an address should wait until the proposal was the subject of discussions with the local authorities, he was persuaded by the NFU Branch Secretary, Mr. D. Duff, to agree to address the branch on the implications of AONB designation at a private meeting in Moreton-in-Marsh on 5 February, 1958.

7. CPRE's proposal to bring the Cotswolds into the AONB programme had clearly become known to the local authorities, for on 16 January 1958, the Gloucestershire County Planning Officer, Eric L. Higgins¹⁰ wrote to the NPC Secretary, informing him that the County Planning Committees of Gloucestershire, Oxfordshire, Worcestershire and Warwickshire had been considering a request to the NPC to designate the Cotswolds as an AONB, but suggesting that an NPC Field Officer could talk over the possible boundaries with the Gloucestershire County Planning Officer before any such request from the local authorities was made. The Commission's Committee B considered the County Planning Officer's request at their meeting on 25 February 1958, and following the Committee's recommendation¹¹, the NPC meeting the next day¹² agreed that a Field Officer should visit the Counties to discuss a draft boundary with the appropriate planning officers. In the meantime the NPC Secretary had successfully addressed the Gloucestershire Branch of the NFU on 5 February, easing many of their fears about AONB designation and the NPC also agreed¹² that the NPC Secretary should discuss

with the County Councils concerned the overall proposal, and the possibility of arranging some form of joint action in administration.

8. Following from the NPC's decision on 26 February Mr. N. Calvert, an NPC officer¹³, wrote to Mr. Higgins on 5 March 1958, and while he emphasised that there was no immediate prospect of bringing the Cotswolds into the AONB programme, he suggested that an informal discussion, on the boundaries and administrative questions, attended by the NPC Secretary, with the County Councils could be held in the near future. Mr. Watson, and Mr. Watkin, the NPC field advisers, met with Mr. Burke, the Deputy Gloucestershire County Planning Officer, on 15 April 1958, who showed them a plan of the area of Gloucestershire, and its adjoining counties, which planners in those counties believed should become a Cotswolds AONB. Watkin's note¹⁴ of 17 April 1958 indicated that the counties' planners wanted Bredon Hill in Worcestershire, a small section of Warwickshire, and a large section of Oxfordshire including Burford and Chipping Norton in the AONB. He also noted that their proposals did not include the ridge beyond Old Sodbury to the Wiltshire and Somerset borders. Although Watkin himself clearly did not believe that Bredon was part of the Cotswolds, nor indeed Burford and Chipping Norton, the NPC field advisers suggested that it was in the County Councils' interests to submit to the NPC the extensive area they wanted for the Cotswolds AONB. Others would do so, if they did not.

9. A few months elapsed before the Clerk to Gloucestershire County Council, Guy Davis¹⁵ wrote to the NPC Secretary (on 24 September 1958) indicating that despite the fact that the NPC had said that there would be no action on the Cotswolds designation for two years, the County Planning Committee proposed to convene a conference of all the local planning authorities' and the NPC to both discuss the boundaries and to persuade the NPC to initiate earlier action on the designation. Harold Abrahams replied to the Gloucestershire County Clerk on 6 October 1958 suggesting that an early and informal discussion on the designation should take place between all the County Clerks involved and himself. The meeting was arranged for 14 November 1958, at Shire Hall, Gloucester, and in the meantime maps of the area which Gloucestershire, Oxfordshire, Worcestershire and Warwickshire suggested should be designated as a Cotswolds AONB were forwarded to the NPC. Mr. N. Calvert, for the NPC Secretary requested the NPC field advisers' views on the boundaries proposed by the four Counties. Watkin's views¹⁶, endorsed by his Senior Field Adviser, L. J. Watson, (L. J. Watson, significantly, had been the Landscape Adviser to the "Hobhouse" Committee and had advised that Committee on the boundaries of the Cotswolds Hobhouse conservation area) were set out in his note to L. J. Watson of 31 October 1958, subsequently passed on to Mr. Calvert. Watkin had noted that Counties' maps excluded the Cotswolds Hills between Bath and Wotton-under-Edge, which had been included in the Hobhouse conservation area, and amongst other detail, criticised the inclusion of so much of the gentle dip-slope in the proposed AONB, describing it "as slightly dull and windswept bare land". As many of the attractive villages and valleys of the Cotswolds extended into this vast dip-slope area, Watkin believed that the NPC would have great difficulty in avoiding the designation of a very extensive area, which, in his view, was only partly of outstanding natural beauty. He was clearly against the AONB being based on the use of the warm-coloured limestone as a building material, arguing that, on this basis the area would stretch from the edge of the

Mendips to the North York Moors! Though arguing for a much reduced area for the AONB with its eastern boundary following the Fosse Way rather than a geological boundary, he criticised the four counties for not consulting Somerset over their exclusion of the Bath - Wotton-under-Edge section of the Cotswolds. Watson broadly agreed with Watkin's views but noted that the NPC would be very unpopular if they excluded the Windrush Valley as far east as Burford from the AONB.

10. Armed with the above advice from the NPC field advisers Mr. Abrahams and Mr. Calvert met with the Clerks and Planning Officers of the four counties then involved, at Shire Hall, Gloucester on 14 November 1958. The note of the meeting prepared by Gloucestershire County Council¹⁷ (and subsequently amended by Harold Abrahams)¹⁸ indicated that the NPC Secretary emphasised that the Hobhouse conservation area, covering 660 square miles, was only used as a basis for consideration, and noted that the four counties' proposals covered a smaller area, only 450 square miles. He believed that the four counties were probably right in excluding those areas of Wiltshire and Somerset which had been within the Hobhouse conservation area, because, if there was to be joint committee for administrative purposes, four constituent authorities would probably be sufficient. (His later amendment¹⁸ of the note suggested that his views on this were more open.) Gloucestershire's note also reported that the NPC Secretary had suggested that 1959 might be a possible date for the designation of the AONB, but his amending letter¹⁸ made it clear that he had meant that 1959 was the date for starting discussions on designation. However, the note of the meeting said the NPC Secretary suggested that if the four counties produced a programme demonstrating how they would make use of various provisions of the 1949 Act for landscape enhancement etc then the designation might be dealt with earlier (a "carrot" which was to be used in the future by the NPC with regard to other AONB proposals). Indeed, after discouraging the idea of a conference, Mr. Abrahams concluded by telling the four counties' representatives that preparing such programmes would be the best way to press the NPC to expedite the designation of the Cotswolds.

11. L. J. Watson clearly saw the note of the meeting, and added, in a further note¹⁹ to Mr. Calvert, dated 24 November 1958, that a good case could be made for extending the proposed AONB southwards to include the Cotswold scarp in Gloucestershire from Wotton-under-Edge to the Somerset border on the outskirts of Bath, and, in Wiltshire, to include the picturesque village of Castle Coombe and its neighbouring valleys. Strangely, having said this, he then recanted in the note's concluding paragraph, by saying that, he and Mr. Watkin believed the area proposed for the AONB was large enough as it was! At this stage, views on the possible extent of the AONB were somewhat fluid, particularly those of the NPC's own Field Advisers.

12. The NPC's Committee B, meeting²⁰ on 25 November 1958, heard its Secretary's report of the meeting earlier that month with representatives of the four counties, and agreed to defer until the next year detailed consideration of the boundaries. At the NPC meeting the next day²¹ the Commission agreed to give consideration to the Cotswolds proposal "in due course, when a vacancy in the current programme occurred".

13. In response to the NPC Secretary's invitation (made at the 14 November 1958 meeting at Shire Hall, Gloucester) only Gloucestershire and Oxfordshire of the four counties, indicated in letters that they were taking action in preparing programmes of action to enhance parts of the proposed AONB. The letter (of 2 February 1959) from the Clerk to Gloucestershire County Council, Guy Davis²², also indicated that the Council saw no objection to an Advisory Committee for the four counties involved, but did not want to see a Committee for six authorities, with Somerset and Wiltshire added.

14. Although progress on the designation itself seemed slow, some further developments, pressing for changes to the boundary tentatively agreed by the four counties in 1958, did occur early in 1959, first, with the West of England Area Office of the Ramblers' Association (RA), pressing (in a letter²³, of 17 March 1959, from its Hon. General Secretary, J. E. Common), for the boundary to run southward to the Avon Valley, in Somerset and Wiltshire. The RA also believed that it was unrealistic not to include Somerset and Wiltshire County Councils in the proposal. Secondly, Oxfordshire County Council, one of the four counties already involved, wrote to the NPC Secretary, in April 1959, seeking a further extension of the proposed AONB in Oxfordshire. Both letters received replies from Mr. Calvert, for the NPC Secretary, indicating that no formal consideration of the AONB proposal had yet taken place, and that their proposals would be considered once the Cotswolds AONB proposal was included in the NPC's AONB programme.

15. The NPC decided, at their meeting²⁴ on 28 October 1959, on the recommendation of their Committee B, to consider the Cotswolds for designation as an AONB, and instructed their staff to recommend a boundary. Unfortunately, it would have seemed that this decision signified a false dawn for progress on the AONB proposal for nothing more happened for two years, and in July 1961, the Hon. Secretary of CPRE Gloucestershire²⁵, W. A. Giffard, wrote formally to Harold Abrahams, reminding him of CPRE's original 1957 resolution and the area's continuing vulnerability to development, and requesting NPC to make the designation of the Cotswolds AONB. In his reply²⁶ of 8 August 1961 Harold Abrahams pointed to the restricted AONB programme, but was hopeful of approaching the local authorities informally (again) on the proposal "within the next few months". Following the Secretary's letter the proposal did once more move on (less slowly), and a few months later, at the NPC meeting²⁷ on 27 February 1962, it was reported that Mr. Watson had prepared a provisional boundary for the AONB and that a party of Commissioners were to visit the area on 25 and 26 May 1962. NPC Paper B/50, prepared in April 1962²⁸, by Mr. Watson provided the only detailed indication (no map has been found on the files) of the provisional boundaries he was proposing, and was circulated generally to all NPC members, rather than to just the inspecting party. The paper demonstrated very well the way in which his boundaries varied from those of the Hobhouse conservation area, which he then clearly believed had been drawn on the generous side. In the far north Watson excluded the Warwickshire Cotswold outliers, drawing the boundary just north of Chipping Campden. South-eastwards his boundary followed the Moreton - Shipton-under-Wychwood railway line, then eastward to include Wychwood Forest, and back westward crossing the Windrush Valley at Asthall. South of Burford, Watson excluded much of the flat, though pleasant Hobhouse area, following the A40 and A33 roads to join the Gloucestershire boundary, which turned southwards

to take in the attractive twin villages of Eastleach Turville and Eastleach Martin, and also Southrop. The boundary then turned westward to Cirencester, thus taking in the very attractive villages of Coln St. Aldwyn, Bibury and Barnsley. Cirencester itself was excluded, though not its Great Park. Watson's provisional boundary then followed the Wiltshire boundary along the Fosse Way for fifteen miles south-westwards, before taking in the Castle Coombe area of Wiltshire, and then running westward along the Gloucestershire boundary to the Somerset boundary north-east of Bath. Watson could not see any justification for including any of Somerset in the AONB, and from the Somerset border drew the boundary neatly northwards along the base of the Cotswold scarp to Dursley. Watson had real problems in drawing the boundary in the Stroud area, arguing that much of it was either semi-industrialised or "subtopia" in character. He eventually excluded much of the Stroud area by means of a deep enclave. North of Stroud he followed the base of the scarp northwards to east of Cheltenham, then north-westwards to include Nottingham and Langley Hills, before following the railway line to include Winchcombe, and taking that line as the western boundary all the way to Weston Subedge Halt, near Chipping Campden.

16. **NPC Inspection of Provisional Boundaries May 1962.** Led by L. J. Watson, their Senior Field Adviser, the NPC party included Harold Abrahams, Professor Steers (the Cambridge University geomorphologist), Mrs. Elwyn Davies, Mrs. Pauline Dower (the widow of John Dower, the author of 1945 seminal report on National Parks), Sir Herbert Griffin (general Secretary of the CPRE), Professor H. C. Darby (the Oxford University historical geographer) and Mr. Gervas Huxley who lived at Oaksey, in the Wiltshire, on the southern edge of the Cotswolds. Brunson Yapp²⁹, who lived at Twyning in Worcestershire, was not able to join the main inspection also provided some useful comments for the inspection. He asked for – the inclusion of the outlier of Oxenton Hill, (as being nearer to the main western scarp than Bredon Hill), the exclusion of Moreton-in-the-Marsh and the nearby airfield with its various civilian uses, the exclusion of much of the land east of Bourton-on-the-Water, and south of Cirencester moving the boundary east away from the Fosse Way, much of which was a "charming green road", and the exclusion of much of the almost suburban loop of the AONB above Bath. Just how far Mr. Yapp's views were taken on board by the visiting party is not recorded on file, which does not even include a copy of the boundary agreed by the visiting party, as referred to by Mr. Gervas Huxley when he reported the inspection to the NPC³⁰ meeting on 26/27 June 1962. This boundary was considered by the NPC and they agreed³⁰ to accept it as the basis for informal consultation with the County Councils concerned.

17. **Informal Consultation with the Local Authorities.** It was not until 1 October 1962 that letters³¹ were sent to the Clerks of Gloucestershire, Worcestershire, Oxfordshire and Wiltshire County Councils, indicating that, although formal consultation would take place in due course, the NPC had suggested that L. J. Watson, their Senior Field Adviser, should discuss the boundaries informally with officers of the County Councils. No mention was made of the proposal affecting either Warwickshire or Somerset, so it seemed that Watson's provisional boundary had been agreed by the NPC and this excluded any parts of these Counties.

18. The results of the informal consultation were summarised in NPC paper B/1973², which was considered by the NPC at their meeting³² on 26/27 February 1963. Oxfordshire County Council's view that the provisional boundary should be extended to the more extensive boundary, possibly including Chipping Norton, they had originally suggested, was rejected by the NPC, but the NPC decided to look again at the possibility of including Bredon Hill, in Worcestershire, and an area of Gloucestershire linking that outlier with the main Cotswolds scarp, following views to this effect by the two counties. A meeting between L. J. Watson and the Wiltshire County Planning Officer was still to be arranged, though a file note³³ by L. J. Watson suggests the Wiltshire planners were in the process of revising their Development Plan landscape areas, and wanted to consider the provisional AONB boundary in relation to these. A letter³⁴ from Kenneth Cooper, the Wiltshire County Planning Officer, to the NPC, in March 1963, added considerably to this, and he commented, that subject to detailed amendments, to either totally include, or exclude, the villages of Grittleton, Yatton Keynell and Biddestone, he found the NPC provisional boundary generally satisfactory. He also mentioned possible Council concern over the effect of AONB designation on hunting; and in an answer to this question, by Miss Douglas of NPC (letter³⁵ of 19 March 1963) he was told that it need not have any effect.

19. Following the decision made at the February 1963 NPC meeting for the Commission to look again at the Bredon Hill area, L. J. Watson inspected the area on 28 April 1963 with Commissioners, Brunsdon Yapp and Gervas Huxley, with the intention of seeing whether it should be a separate outlier of the AONB or if it could be linked to the main area by a corridor. Watson's detailed note³⁶ of the visit forms a separate folio in the full history, but, after his report on the visit at the May NPC meeting³⁷, the Commission accepted the recommendation of the visiting party that the Bredon Hill area, broadly based on the Worcestershire Development Plan Landscape Area (with a possible extension to take in both banks of the River Avon and Bredon Village - an extension proposal which was apparently rejected by Watson early in June prior to his report to the NPC June meeting) and a neck of land linking this to the main Cotswolds scarp, be included. The connecting strip joining Bredon Hill to the main area included Dumbleton Hill and Village on its north side, and Alderton and Toddington on the south, while the Bredon Hill area itself excluded Beckford Village, and then followed a line clockwise round the base of the Hill to take in the villages of Overbury, Kemerton, Bredon's Norton, the Combertons, Elmley Castle and Ashton under Hill. Although the NPC requested that a map be prepared for their approval at the next meeting³⁷ with a view to opening formal consultations with local authorities, the files reveal that this proposed action was a little premature. L. J. Watson still had to undertake a number of meetings with local authority officers before finalising the formal consultation boundaries.

20. In June 1963 L. J. Watson³⁸ met with Kenneth Cooper, the Wiltshire County Planning Officer, and agreed to the complete inclusion of the Cotswold stone villages of Grittleton, Yatton Keynell and Biddestone, within the proposed AONB. In the same month³⁹ he also met with Mr. Pridham and Mr. Burke, Deputy County Planning Officers of Worcestershire and Gloucestershire, respectively, to further discuss Bredon Hill and its link with the main Cotswolds. Mr. Pridham sought to extend the AONB further around Bredon Hill, while Mr. Burke argued that if Bredon Hill was to be included in the

AONB, then there would be a good case for also including the nearby Cotswold outlier of Oxenton Hill, and also much more of the intervening country between the main Cotswolds scarp and the Worcestershire County boundary. Watson, however, did not make any formal comments on these proposals by Worcestershire and Gloucestershire. When he reported his informal discussions with the Wiltshire, Worcestershire and Gloucestershire planners at the NPC June 1963 meeting⁴⁰, the NPC agreed to accept the minor amendments suggested by the Wiltshire County Planning Officer, but with respect to the latest Worcestershire and Gloucestershire suggestions, to retain the boundary which they had approved at their May 1963 meeting. The NPC then instructed their staff to proceed with formal consultation, under Section 87(2) of the 1949 Act, of the local authorities concerned.

21. **Formal Consultation with Local Authorities.** There were delays in the printing of the 150 maps required for the formal consultation process, with the map eventually compiled and printed in two sections (North and South) at the scale of one inch to the mile. The maps and formal consultation letters⁴¹ (from Mervyn Bell, the new NPC Secretary, who had succeeded Harold Abrahams in October 1963) were not sent out until 13 May 1964, and went to the Clerks of the four county councils then involved in the proposal ie Gloucestershire, Oxfordshire, Wiltshire and Worcestershire, and to the twenty one district councils involved – fifteen in Gloucestershire ie Cheltenham MBC; Charlton Kings, Cirencester, Nailsworth, and Stroud UDCs; Cheltenham, Cirencester, Dursley, Gloucester, North Cotswold, Northleach, Sodbury, Stroud, Tetbury and Warmley RDCs – two in Oxfordshire ie Chipping Norton and Witney RDCs – two in Wiltshire ie Calne and Chippenham, and Malmesbury RDCs – and two in Worcestershire ie Evesham and Pershore RDCs. It should be noted that while Warwickshire was clearly not on the list of local authorities formally consulted in May 1964, they were forewarned⁴², in February 1964 of the imminent opening of the formal consultation. As was normal practice (though not required by statute) copies of the draft map were also sent for comment, in June 1964, to the CEEGB, the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (MAFF), the Forestry Commission (FC), the National Trust (NT), the Nature Conservancy (NC), the Crown Estate Commissioners, CPRE, and the Local Government Section of the Ministry of Housing and Local Government (MHLG).

22. Of the twenty five authorities formally consulted, sixteen had no representations for amendments to the boundary – and nine, Oxfordshire CC, Cheltenham MBC; Charlton Kings and Nailsworth UDCs; Cheltenham, Chipping Norton, Gloucester, Malmesbury and Witney RDCs, all had boundary representations⁴³. *Oxfordshire CC* sought substantial extensions of the AONB within Witney RD to bring in an area characterised by such traditional Cotswold villages as Shilton, Filkins and Langford, and within Chipping Norton RD, to bring in the foothills of the Cotswolds, taking in villages like Ascott and Charlbury and the “ironstone” character villages of Great and Little Tew and Sandford St. Martin. The letter, written by the Clerk, also approved, in principle, the setting up of an Advisory Committee. *The Witney and Chipping Norton RDCs* supported Oxfordshire CC representations, though *Chipping Norton RDC* wanted the inclusion of a slightly larger area including parts of Salford and the village of Cornwell. *Cheltenham MBC and Charlton Kings UDC* both requested the exclusion of land at Battledown, Ham, and other likely “building” land on the eastern outskirts of Charlton Kings. *Cheltenham RDC*

sought a new boundary to include all the area broadly to the east of a line running north from Gotherington past Teddington to Overbury which would take in the undoubted Cotswold character hills of Dixton, Oxenton, Woolstone, Teddington and their adjacent villages. *Nailsworth UDC* requested the exclusion of the whole of their area because of the shortage of building land. *Gloucester RDC* requested a small boundary change at Haresfield to completely exclude the village from the AONB. *Malmesbury RDC* considered that the division of their District between AONB and the rest was not justified and sought total inclusion of the District in the AONB.

23. Of the other bodies consulted by practice, rather than statute, only the CPRE, NT and the NC made comments⁴³ on the boundary. *The CPRE*⁴⁸ suggested a number of boundary changes (a) in the Beckford area the boundary should be drawn back to exclude a sand and gravel pit, a filling station and what was described as the largest greenhouse in Europe, (b) in the Minchinhampton and Amberley area, where they recommended the inclusion of the high plateau between the Stroud and Nailsworth villages, despite the scattered development, (c) to the east of Cirencester, in the Ampney Crucis - Quenington area, they suggested the boundary should be extended to include the group of attractive villages along the Fairford Road (A417), (d) in Oxfordshire, they agreed with the CC's view that the AONB should extend eastwards to take in the Rollrights, the Tewes, Charlbury and Minster Lovell. They also supported the CC's view that the AONB should be extended south of Burford, but not south of the line of Akeman Street; (e) they also sought an extension on the Gloucestershire/Oxfordshire border to take in the Adlestrop-Chastleton-Kingham area, and (f) in the Mickleton/Ilmington area on the Gloucestershire/Warwickshire border, where they fully regarded this area of hill and village to be up to Cotswold landscape quality. *The National Trust*, owners of Hidcote Garden and Hidcote Bartrim also supported the inclusion of this area at the northern end of the main Cotswold scarp. Finally, *the NC* sought the inclusion of Rodborough Common SSSI, despite its nearness to built-up areas, and a small addition in the Minchinhampton Common area.

24. The results of the formal consultation process were reported, in NPC Paper⁴³ B/518, to the NPC at their January 1965 meeting. Taking into account the Paper and the oral reports given at the meeting by Mr. Gervas Huxley and L. J. Watson, the Commission decided⁴⁴ that the boundaries should be advertised without any amendments and the staff were instructed to take the necessary action.

25. On the day of the NPC January 1965 meeting, when the NPC considered the representations and took the decision not to alter the boundaries, Guy Davis, the Gloucestershire Clerk, wrote⁴⁵ to the NPC Secretary, pointing out that if Oxfordshire County Council's representations were accepted by the Commission, then Gloucestershire CC would reasonably ask for adjoining areas to be included in the AONB ie that part of Gloucestershire enclosed by the Moreton - Chipping Norton Road on the north, the Worcester - Oxford railway line to the west, and the County boundary to the south and east.

26. The files indicate that despite the NPC's January 1965 decision to go ahead and publicly advertise the proposed AONB, the designation process slowed down almost to a

complete halt, and it was not until August 1965 that preparations were started for the NPC to advertise their intention to designate the proposed Cotswolds AONB.

27. In the meantime the files indicate that following the January 1965 decision that, apparently, letters were sent (as late as August 1965) only to CPRE, Oxfordshire CC and Cheltenham MBC, informing them of the reasons why their representations were rejected by the NPC. Miss Chesterman, an NPC officer, wrote to all three bodies on 26 August 1965. In her letter⁴⁶ to the Clerk of Oxfordshire County Council, she said that while the NPC appreciated the attractiveness of some of the country the Council wished to include in the AONB, they decided that in terms of their landscape value there was not sufficient justification to agree these areas as extensions. Cheltenham MBC, who wanted areas excluded in the Charlton Kings area were told in Miss Chesterman's letter⁴⁷ that in the NPC's view, "this is a good section of the country which might reasonably be regarded as qualifying for inclusion in the financial and other advantages of the Act". Her letter⁴⁸ to Mervyn V. Osmond, Deputy Secretary of CPRE, was more detailed, explaining the NPC's reasons for not accepting the representations made in CPRE's letter of 19 January 1965⁴⁸ (and outlined in para 23 above). On the CPRE proposals for amending the boundaries, Miss Chesterman's letter gave the NPC views as follows:

- i. Mickleton, Ilmington etc - here the NPC, while accepting that the villages were individually attractive, did not believe the surrounding area warranted a revision of the boundary as suggested.
- ii. Chastleton, Adlestrop etc - the landscape was not good enough for altering the boundary eastward across the Evenlode Valley.
- iii. Oxfordshire extension - the NPC views on the overall quality of the landscape (as also given to Oxfordshire on the same date) were that it was not sufficiently high to justify amendment.
- iv. Wetwell, Holwell etc; the NPC did not believe that this landscape south of Burford was good enough to be included in the AONB.
- v. Ampney Crucis - Quenington area - the NPC, while accepting the villages were of good quality did not believe the surrounding countryside was attractive enough to justify inclusion of this area.
- vi. Minchinhampton and Amberley - notwithstanding the attraction of the Commons and NT properties the NPC believed the area was too developed for AONB status.
- vii. Beckford (near Bredon Hill) - the NPC had agreed a reasonable boundary with the Worcester County Planning Officer.

The NPC considered the correspondence with the CPRE, which was set out in Paper⁴⁸ B/667, at their meeting⁴⁹ on 26 October 1965.

28. In all three letters written on 26 August 1965 Miss Chesterman reminded their recipients that if they still held to their views, then their representations would be forwarded to the Minister, as representations to which the Order did not give effect, when the NPC submitted the AONB Order to him for confirmation. She also added that, in light of the NPC's comments, should they decide to withdraw their representations then the Commission would wish to be informed of this.

29. **Public Advertisement of the Cotswolds AONB (Designation) Order, in October 1965.** On 19 October 1965, the NPC⁵⁰ advertised its intention to designate, and to submit to the Minister of Housing and Local Government for confirmation, the Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (Designation) Order, 1965. The Order, affecting some 582 square miles (1507 sq km) of land in the counties of Gloucestershire, Oxfordshire, Wiltshire and Worcestershire, was advertised nationally, in the London Gazette, and in nineteen local newspapers⁵⁵ circulating in the area affected by the Order, in accordance with the requirements of Section 87(2) of the 1949 Act. Copies of the proposed Order and the designation map were put on public deposit in the Offices of four County Councils, one Municipal Borough Council, four Urban District Councils and sixteen Rural District Councils affected⁵⁰, while further copies of the Order and the designation map were made available for public inspection at the NPC Offices in London. Representations on the Order and map were invited to be sent to Mervyn Bell, the NPC Secretary, not later than 26 November 1965.

30. All the representations received seeking amendment of the proposed boundary were set out in Paper B/691, which⁵¹ was considered by the NPC at their meeting⁵² on 21 December 1965. The NPC were reminded, in Appendix A to Paper B/691, of the representations received, from the local authorities affected, at the formal consultation stage, and of the NPC's views on these representations. The CPRE representations, and the NPC views on them, were also set out in Appendix A.

31. Importantly, the main paper also indicated that following the NPC decision, at their meeting on 26 January 1965, to advertise the proposed boundary without amendment, six local authorities ie Oxfordshire CC, Cheltenham MBC, Cheltenham, Chipping Norton, Gloucester and Witney RDCs had withdrawn their representations. The NC also withdrew their representations on the inclusion of land at Rodborough and Minchinhampton Commons. CPRE's letter⁴⁸ of 4 October 1965, while not withdrawing their objections as set out in their letter of 19 January 1965, did indicate that they sought further discussions with the NPC. The main paper makes it clear that (apparently following such discussions) CPRE had most recently said that they would not press their representations, but only because they did not wish to delay the designation, a consideration which also influenced Oxfordshire CC in their decision to withdraw their representation. The Paper also reported that once the Order was confirmed, the CPRE might reopen the matter with a request to the NPC for certain extensions to the designation.

32. Charlton Kings UDC (despite Cheltenham MBC withdrawing their similar objection), Nailsworth UDC, and Malmesbury RDC (details as in para 23) and the National Trust maintained their objections. Since the public advertisement in October

1965, the Paper reported that the NT had made a further representation with Oxenton Hill, an Cotswold outlier, being added to their original list (para 23), despite Cheltenham RDC withdrawing their representation for the NPC to include this Hill in the AONB.

33. Also following advertisement, *the Earl of Harrowby, with estate interests in the Northern Cotswolds, made a representation (Appendix B, Paper B/691) relating to land at the northern end of the Cotswold scarp, where he sought the inclusion, in the AONB of the parishes of Mickleton, Ebrington, Ilmington and the Quintons.* While admitting that some of the land in these parishes was not of Cotswold standard, he argued most strongly (based on his own knowledge of the Cotswolds and its villages) for a boundary which would have taken in the villages of Mickleton, Ilmington, Ebrington, and Paxford as well as the hamlets of Upper and Lower Clopton, the Hidcotes, Charingworth and Foxcote, all of which, in his view, were of a "very high Cotswold order". He also suggested that he would be happy to inspect the land in question with the NPC or any of its representatives. It should be noted that both CPRE and the NT had requested the inclusion of substantially the same area (though CPRE had withdrawn their representations to avoid any delay in designation).

34. After a full discussion of Paper B/691, the NPC agreed, at their December 1965 meeting⁵², to inspect certain areas again before the area was finally designated prior to the submission of the Order to the Minister. Brunsdon Yapp, a Commissioner who lived nearby, was chosen to look at the area of the North Cotswolds suggested for inclusion by the Earl of Harrowby.

35. In the meantime two late representations were received from Cirencester RDC and the RA. NPC Paper⁵³ B/717 outlined these late representations, and was considered by the NPC at their meeting⁵⁴ in January 1966, at the same time their fellow Commissioner, Brunsdon Yapp, reported orally on his visit to the area of the North Cotswolds proposed for inclusion in the AONB by the Earl of Harrowby.

36. *Cirencester RDC requested the inclusion of the whole of Fairford and Lechlade Parishes within the AONB.* The NPC's senior field adviser gave his views on this representation in the appendix to the paper, stating that although he believed the two villages were attractive, he did not feel the surrounding country was of sufficient high quality for inclusion in the AONB.

37. *The RA sought the inclusion within the AONB of Minchinhampton and Rodborough Parishes, excepting the industrialised valley, and perhaps Minchinhampton itself.* The NPC view, already given earlier to CPRE, which had already pressed for inclusion of these areas, was that "the whole area had become so developed that it could hardly lay claim to being a predominantly natural landscape". Like the CPRE, the NT and the Earl of Harrowby, *the RA requested that Mickleton and the Hidcotes should come into the AONB, and they considered the Oxford-Worcester railway line as being a most inadequate boundary in this area.* The NPC paper repeated the response already given to the CPRE and the NT that, although the villages were very attractive, the tract of country as a whole as not of sufficiently high quality.

38. Unfortunately the files do not contain any site report on Brunsdon Yapp's further inspection of the Cotswold scarp and outliers north of Chipping Campden so favoured

by the Earl of Harrowby. However, after hearing Mr Yapp's oral report the NPC were recorded (in the minutes) as expressing their sympathy with the Earl of Harrowby's views, and not questioning that some parts of the area concerned were attractive. Nevertheless "they did not believe that enough of the countryside in question was so good that its inclusion warranted holding up the making of the designation Order (sic)".

39. Finally, the NPC⁵⁴ instructed their staff to convey these views to the Earl of Harrowby and the other objectors, and then resolved "that the Commission approve the making of the Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (Designation) Order, 1966 and authorise the affixing of the Commission's seal thereto."

40. **Submission of the Cotswolds AONB (Designation) Order, 1966 to MHLG, 7 March 1966.** The Order was sealed on 22 February 1966 and signed by Lord Strang, the NPC Chairman, and Mervyn Bell, the NPC Secretary, and was sent on 7 March 1966 to the Secretary at MHLG, with a covering letter⁵⁵ and copies of the representations to which the Order did not give effect, set out in an annex to the letter. Although the annex listed the representations by Oxfordshire CC and the CPRE it was also made clear that both bodies had subsequently withdrawn those representations, as they did not wish to delay designation. The annex also referred to the possibility that CPRE might again press for certain extensions once the Order had been confirmed.

41. **Confirmation of the Cotswolds AONB (Designation) Order, 1966, by the Minister of Housing and Local Government, on 19 August 1966.** From the date of submission in March 1966 it took little more than five months before the Order was confirmed, without modification, by the Minister of Housing and Local Government, the Rt. Hon. Anthony Greenwood, MP (who had just succeeded Richard Crossman as Minister), and signed on his behalf by Anne McNichol⁵⁶, Assistant Secretary to MHLG, on 19 August 1966.

42. The confirmed designation, with its area unchanged at 582 square miles (or 1507 sq km), still affected only four counties, (ie Gloucestershire, Oxfordshire, Wiltshire, and Worcestershire) and twenty-one district councils spread across those counties. Basically the confirmed area (Map 2) retained the boundaries which were approved by the NPC at their June 1963 meeting as the basis for formal consultation with the twenty-five local authorities affected by the then proposed designation. These boundaries survived not only the representations received at the formal consultation stage (which opened in May 1964), but also at the public advertisement stage (October 1965). The Minister, too, as seen above, made no modifications to the boundary in his consideration of the representations which were not taken account of in the Order.

43. Significantly, the AONB confirmed in 1966, was less extensive (582 square miles) than the Cotswolds Hobhouse conservation area (660 square miles) excluding those parts of the counties of Warwickshire (Meon Hill and the Hills west of Ilmington) and Somerset (around the northern suburbs of Bath) which were included in the Hobhouse conservation area. A large part of the Hobhouse conservation area in Oxfordshire, between Bledington, Shipton-under-Wychiwood and Burford, was included in the confirmed designation, though its easternmost area, the ridges of the Leafield, Linstock

and Asthall Leigh areas of Oxfordshire, was excluded. Only the impressive outlier of Bredon Hill in Worcestershire with a neck of land in the Dumbleton, Alderton and Toddington areas of Gloucestershire linking it to the main Cotswold scarp at Stanway, had been added to the Hobhouse conservation area. Although the confirmation of the Order had given the greater part of the quintessential English landscape of the Cotswolds national status and protection, the associated MHLG press release⁵⁷ highlighted the fact that many had wanted the boundary drawn more liberally.

44. Indeed, during the consultation and public advertisement stages, the CPRE had indicated that, despite withdrawing their representations to avoid delay in designation, they might decide to request extensions once the Order had been confirmed. It was clear that some of the more significant exclusions from the designation would remain, for some organisations like the CPRE, as "unfinished business", and would (as subsequent paragraphs of this history demonstrate), be resurrected in the future.

45. Administration to 1990

Following their stated intention, the four Counties involved, and the NPC, established a Joint Advisory Committee (JAC) for the AONB in 1967. The JAC comprised representatives of the constituent authorities and other interest groups, including a representative of the Countryside Commission, James Fisher (the nature historian, who had become the NPC's Deputy Chairman), and its remit was to advise and co-ordinate to achieve the effective management of the AONB. Its first Chairman was Geoffrey Shackerley, a Gloucestershire County Councillor, and his appointment reflected the major role played by Gloucestershire County Council in servicing the JAC and its supporting 'Technical Officers' Working Party (TOWP). The County Council was to retain the role of "host" county for the JAC, surviving the changes brought by local government re-organisation in 1974, until the establishment of the Cotswolds AONB Partnership in 1999. Although the JAC, with the help of its host County Council, established a Cotswolds AONB Voluntary Warden Service as early as 1968, it had no statutory planning or administrative role; the constituent County Councils and the Borough and District Councils were still responsible for preparing development plans and dealing with planning applications throughout the area. Nevertheless, encouraged by the Countryside Commission's enhanced promotion of AONB management policies in the early nineteen eighties, the JAC, with basic support from Gloucestershire County Council's Countryside Service, and the TOWP, initiated tentative steps in 1982 towards the preparation of a fully-fledged management strategy for the AONB. Already, from 1979 onwards, the JAC and its TOWP were advising the Commission on a southern extension to the AONB, and from 1985, on a complete AONB Boundary Review. The very real likelihood of a major expansion of the area of the AONB at the end of the eighties accelerated the process of preparing the JAC for a new expanded role, and re-constitution in 1991.

Designation History - II The Cotswolds AONB (Designation) Variation Order, 1989

46. **Cotswold AONB Proposed Southern Extension 1977 - 85.** The southern boundary of the Cotswolds AONB confirmed in 1966 was clearly defined for administrative convenience along the then Gloucestershire/Somerset boundary, and hence excluded the characteristic and high quality Cotswold landscape which extended to the northern and western suburbs of the city of Bath, an area previously part of the 1947 Hobhouse Cotswolds Conservation area. Local Government re-organisation and boundary changes in 1974 highlighted this anomaly, for the new County of Avon extended northwards into Gloucestershire to include a significant area of the AONB, and left the AONB boundary, based on the previous administrative boundary, as an artificial line with no relevance at all either to administrative reality or to landscape character. Avon County Council identified this boundary anomaly immediately, and as part of their emerging structure and local plan work in the area, undertook a study of a possible southern extension to the Cotswolds AONB, which they completed in 1977. The study, including a comprehensive appraisal of geological and landscape features, concluded that there was a strong case for extending the AONB southwards to the north, east and south of Bath, and also over the Avon/Wiltshire boundary into West Wiltshire. North of Bath the boundary included all the prominent hillside which was an integral part of the setting of the city, while east and south of Bath the outstanding wooded valley of the Avon was included to Bradford-on-Avon together with the tributary valleys of the Cam and Wellow Brooks and the plateau in between. The whole of the extension area, covering 40 square miles (Map 3) was considered to be equivalent in landscape quality to the best parts of the existing AONB. In 1979 Avon CC's proposal for an extension was favourably received by the other county councils involved, (Somerset, Wiltshire and Gloucestershire) who resolved to consult the Cotswolds AONB JAC on the proposal. The JAC resolved at their meeting in October 1979 to support the southern extension proposed and also to consult with the Countryside Commission (the NPC had become the Countryside Commission in 1968). In early 1980 the Commission was formally consulted on the proposed extension, and the proposal was accepted in principle by the Director, Reg Hookway, (who had become the Commission's first Director in 1973, when he had succeeded Mervyn Bell, the last Secretary of the Commission), and an Officers' Working Party established to agree the boundaries of the area (the preliminary map) and prepare a Statement of Intent setting out the planning and management policies proposed for the area. The preliminary map boundaries were prepared by the Officers' Working Party, and were formally considered and approved by the Countryside Commission (by then chaired by Sir Derek Barber and supported by their second Director, Adrian Phillips) at their meeting⁵⁸ in December 1982. At the same meeting the Commission also agreed to invite the local authorities concerned, led by Avon CC, to run an informal consultation exercise on the proposal with interested organisations and the general public.

47. Despite the positive decision by the Commission in December 1982, further consideration of the proposal was delayed in March 1983 until decisions were reached on the four new AONBs then awaiting Ministerial confirmation. The Commission believed that in the light of opposition from landowning interests to further designation it was unwise to proceed with the informal consultation exercise on the southern extension until decisions on the outstanding designations had been taken.

Decisions by the Secretary of State for the Environment in October 1983 confirming three of the outstanding designation orders, and his earlier invitation to the Commission to review the boundaries of some of the AONBs already designated, led the Commission to request the local authorities to start the informal consultation exercise on the Cotswolds AONB southern extension in June-July 1985 but as part of a wider review of the boundaries of the whole AONB, for which the Commission SW Regional Officer, Richard Lloyd, would have overall responsibility.

48. **Boundary Review – Preliminary consultations 1985 - 86.** In his July 1982 Statement on AONBs (giving the Government's response to the Commission's major 1978 – 81 re-appraisal of the value of AONBs), the Secretary of State for the Environment invited the Countryside Commission to review the boundaries of some of the 33 AONBs then (1982) designated. In the Commission's AONB Policy Statement published in November 1983, which took account of the Government's response to the AONB re-appraisal, it announced that a review of boundaries would be undertaken, and that a programme would be prepared by 1985. With the Commission's most recent involvement in the Southern Extension proposed for the Cotswolds AONB, top priority was given to the Cotswolds AONB in the review. The Southern Extension would be included in the changes proposed (deletions as well as additions) in an overall Cotswolds AONB Variation Order, prepared under Sections 87 and 110 of the 1949 Act. In giving this top priority for a review of the boundaries of the Cotswolds AONB, the Commission was not only aware of the progress already made on the Southern Extension, but also the suggestions for change made by a number of local authorities and others, and the wide recognition that there were large areas of outstanding landscape adjacent to the existing boundaries, particularly at their northern extremities. The Commission had also considered that in parts of the existing AONB the landscape had been materially changed by agricultural practices and some developments and no longer met national landscape standards.

49. The aim of the review therefore was to resolve anomalies in the boundary which had arisen since confirmation of the original AONB Order in 1966, and to consider whether any areas should be added to, or deleted from, the AONB.^A In early 1985 all the local authorities within, and adjacent to, the AONB, were invited to submit detailed proposals for boundary change to the Commission, using the main criteria for AONB boundary change approved by the Commission⁵⁹ in March 1984 (Annex A of Paper 84/21), and the special criteria prepared for the Cotswolds AONB by the Commission and the local authorities in the Cotswolds. These special criteria were broadly the same as those already prepared for the Southern Extension. It had been decided, that, in

^A The whole process from the start of the full Cotswolds AONB Boundary Review in early 1985 to the confirmation of the Variation Order in 1990, was extremely lengthy and detailed, and a proper account of the detail of boundary change and delineation, following the pattern set in the previous paragraphs dealing with the original designation, would completely overwhelm this history. To avoid this, the author has attempted to summarise the whole process in the main text, though including, as folios, in the full report, the several lengthy Commission papers (from 1984 to 1990) dealing with the process. For those researchers seeking even more detail, this is contained in nine CC files dealing with the Review, and listed by the author, together with the references, at the end of this history.

addition to the general criteria, changes to the boundaries of the Cotswolds AONB should be considered with reference to three main factors:

- a. Landscape quality – was the quality of the landscape commensurate with the landscape quality in other parts of the Cotswolds AONB and other AONBs and was it higher in quality than other adjoining areas of special landscape designation?
- b. Cotswolds characteristics – did the area exhibit similarities with the Cotswolds AONB in terms of landscape character (landform, tree cover, natural flora etc) and in terms of “Cotswold” characteristics eg oolitic limestone building materials, stone slate roofs, drystone walls and Cotswold vernacular building types?
- c. Conservation importance – did the area contain, in addition to these characteristic features, a high proportion of features of conservation importance (landscape, nature conservation, archaeology etc), which would benefit from the more stringent policies of development control applicable in AONBs?

Any proposed extensions would have needed to satisfy all three, and the same factors would have needed to be taken into account in the identification of those areas which it was considered no longer merited designation and were, therefore, proposed for deletion.

50. Following the invitation made by the Commission, a number of submissions for boundary change (in addition to the Southern extension) were made by the constituent authorities of the Cotswolds AONB JAC, and, indeed, by authorities adjoining the AONB. As expected, many of these were long-standing, often dating back to proposals made at the time of the original designation (1966). The map which formed Annex 3 to the Commission paper⁶⁰ 85/19 showed the overall extent of the proposals, included extensive areas of Oxfordshire and Warwickshire, and some major extensions eastwards on the Cotswold dip-slope in Gloucestershire, plus smaller areas like the outliers of Oxenton and Dixton Hill. Officers of the Commission's South West Regional Office looked at the local authority proposals (except the Southern Extension which had already been endorsed by the Commission in 1982), assessing them against the general and specific Cotswold landscape criteria. While the officers accepted some of the extensions proposed in Warwickshire and Oxfordshire, and the Oxenton Hill proposal in Gloucestershire, they also highlighted the fact that none of the local authority submissions suggested significant exclusions, and because of this put forward their own suggestions for exclusions, mainly on the dip-slope eastern boundary in Gloucestershire, but also including areas linking the Bredon Hill outlier with the main scarp. This preliminary officer assessment of the proposals, and their own proposals for exclusions, was shown in map-form⁶⁰ as Annex 4 to Paper 85/19, and this map was approved by the Commission⁶⁰ at their meeting in March 1985 as the basis for negotiation. The Commission also agreed to await drafting their proposals for boundary amendment and consultation, until their own visit later in the year (July 1985).

51. Prior to the proposed Commission visit a more detailed appraisal of the existing AONB boundaries and the proposed changes was carried by officers out during May and June 1985. Commission Paper 85/46 summarised⁶¹ the detailed appraisal, highlighting five main areas i. the M4 corridor and the adjacent eastern boundary, ii. the major NE extension of the AONB into Warwickshire and Oxfordshire, iii. the Frome and Nailsworth valleys and the land between, iv. the area between Bredon Hill and the Cotswolds scarp, and v. the eastern boundary between Malmesbury and Burford which presented difficulties in terms of boundary definition, as well as listing other significant changes. The Map⁶¹ forming Annex 1 to Paper 85/46 showed the main changes very clearly and was also used by the Commission on their visit at the end of July. With regard to the main areas which presented difficulties in boundary definition the Commission agreed their officers' views that - only part of the M4 corridor area should be deleted, ii. the major extension into Warwickshire and Oxfordshire be severely restricted, iii. the Frome and Nailsworth Valleys, and the land in between, be included; iv. at Bredon Hill, only a narrow link between that Hill and the Dumbleton/Alderton Hills be retained, and that area be left as an outlier from the main scarp, and v. on the eastern boundary between Malmesbury and Burford, for all the deletions to remain, excepting the Avon River valley between Foxley and Malmesbury. The Commission endorsed the boundary changes described in Paper⁶¹ 85/46, and its Annex 1 map, as the basis for preliminary consultations with the JAC and the other authorities involved in the review, prior to the Commission's final endorsement of the proposals for boundary change which would be used in the public informal consultation process proposed for autumn 1986.

52. The informal consultation with the local authorities on the boundary changes, endorsed by the Commission in August 1985, was completed in January 1986, and Annex 1 of Commission Paper 86/26 (considered by the Commission in their April 1986 meeting⁶²) summarised the local authorities' views, and the Commission officers' reactions to them. With regard to the main areas presenting difficulties which have been highlighted in para 51 above - i. the M4 corridor, where both Avon CC and Northavon DC broadly opposed the Commission views for deletion from the AONB, the Commission endorsed their officers' views that all the land in the western part of the corridor, in Avon, should remain within the AONB; ii. the major extensions of the AONB into Warwickshire and Oxfordshire - Warwickshire County Council requested the Commission to reconsider its proposal to exclude the scarp slope between Upper Tysoe and Warmington Gap, including Edge Hill, but the Commission continued to endorse its officers' views to keep the northern boundary at Upper Tysoe - in Oxfordshire the County Council and the District Councils broadly maintained their views on seeking additional areas in the Evenlode Valley, and the Ironstone Downs area, but also sought the exclusion of the plateau immediately east of Chipping Norton, and the Commission approved their officers' views to make some amendments in response, by including the Evenlode Valley upstream of Long Hanborough, excluding the plateau land immediately to the east of Chipping Norton though the Ironstone Downs area was still excluded; iii. the Frome and Nailsworth Valleys and the land in between, here Gloucestershire CC and Stroud DC accepted the inclusion of this area in the AONB; iv. Bredon Hill and the Dumbleton/Alderton Hills - most local authorities were against the Commission's proposals; and although they persuaded the Commission and its officers to

rejoin the Dumbleton – Alderton Hill outlier to the main designation at the western scarp, the Commission decided to take out from the AONB the valley land link between Dumbleton Hill and Bredon Hill, leaving the latter as a separate outlier of the main AONB; and v. the eastern boundary between Malmesbury and Burford, here Wiltshire CC supported the Commission's retention in the AONB of the Avon River Valley between Foxley and Malmesbury, while Cotswold DC objected strongly to the deletion from the AONB of land east of Aldsworth and Eastleach and south of Southrop, though to no avail, as the Commission did not amend this deletion.

53. Annex 1 to the Commission Paper 86/26 also indicated that there were still a number of minor boundary changes to be made, and that once these had been made, they would be added to the major boundary changes which had been agreed at the same April meeting⁶², and used in the plans to be prepared for the informal public consultation exercise. This exercise, of course, would exclude the Southern Extension area, where the public consultation had already taken place, over three months from July to September 1985. Avon and Wiltshire County Councils had run the exercise on behalf of the Commission, and its results were briefly summarised^B in Commission Paper 86/26. For the purpose of this history it will suffice to say that the general response to the informal consultation on Southern Extension was favourable, with 108 out of 148 representations being in favour of the proposal. Only three letters of objection were received, from Timber Growers UK, the Camping and Caravanning Club and the NFU, but these, after meetings between Commission Officers and officers of the three organisations, were subsequently withdrawn. One local authority, West Wiltshire DC, still remained opposed to the proposed extension in its area.

54. **Boundary Review – Informal Consultation Exercise.** Following the Commission's endorsement of its officers' recommendations in Commission Paper 86/26 the way was now clear to proceed to the informal consultation exercise on the proposed changes to the Cotswolds AONB. These were published in September 1986, in a form of a consultation statement⁶³ on the Cotswold AONB Boundary Review which was widely circulated, together with three 1:50,000 scale plans showing the proposals. Views were requested by 17 December 1986 on the changes which had been put forward, following the Commission's own appraisal of the boundary and of proposals put to it by local authorities in and around the Cotswolds. 1:25,000 scale plans of the changes were also available for viewing at local authority offices. The statement included both the general criteria for AONB boundary review and the specific criteria which had been prepared for the Cotswolds AONB. The five main areas for AONB extensions and the four main areas for deletion from the AONB were listed and described in the consultation statement as follows:

AONB Extensions

1. Around Minchinhampton and Rodborough (Gloucestershire) – an area of high ground between the River Frome and the Nailsworth Valleys. Extensive areas of

^B A full Countryside Commission comb-bound report, "Conclusions from informal public consultations, Cotswolds AONB, Proposed Southern Extension, January 1986", is to be found in the folder-envelope at the front of the Countryside Commission file, Cotswolds AONB Proposed Southern Extension, numbered SW/V/8/1 Part C.

common land, popular for recreation, were owned by the National Trust and left as grazing. Between Nailsworth, Minchinhampton and Stroud there was a network of minor roads with a pattern of low density residential development. The older settlements of Minchinhampton, Butterow and Burleigh were typically Cotswolds in appearance. East of Minchinhampton there was less development; this area blended into the more open plateau landscape around Cherington and Aston Down, which was already part of the AONB.

2. Oxenton Hill and Dixton Hill (Gloucestershire) – approximately four miles north of Cheltenham, Oxenton Hill (223 m) was separated from the main Cotswold escarpment by a narrow valley. Its north and east facing slopes were well-wooded. Dixton Hill was a smaller feature forming a link between Oxenton Hill and the then boundary of the AONB.

3. Ebrington Hill and Meon Hill (Gloucestershire/Warwickshire) – a distinctive group of rounded hills which extended north and eastwards from Chipping Campden to Ilmington in Warwickshire. Ebrington Hill (254 m) was a prominent feature which was linked by a ridge of high ground to the adjacent area south west of the Oxford to Worcester railway; the latter feature formed the then northern boundary of the AONB.

4. Between Little Compton and Upper Tysoe (Warwickshire) – this area continued the northern part of the proposed Oxfordshire extension beyond the county boundary into Warwickshire. The area around Long Compton, Whichford and Cherington was undulating in character with many small valleys. There were prominent woodland and parkland areas between Whichford and Little Wolford, but towards the northern end of the proposed Warwickshire extension the landscape became more open and less wooded. The highest points in this area were More Hill (190 m) and Windmill Hill (181 m). Settlements were built in the Cotswold vernacular.

5. Between Chipping Norton, Combe and Minster Lovell (Oxfordshire) – this large extension exhibited some variation in character. At its southern end, the landscape between the Evenlode and Windrush Valleys was strongly undulating. There were some prominent woodlands in this area, the largest being Wychwood Forest, south of Charlbury. The northern and eastern parts of this proposed extension, between Charlbury and Hook Norton, were more open in character and mainly under arable cultivation.

Deletions from the AONB –

6. East of Aldsworth (Gloucestershire) – this open plateau area on the eastern edge of the dip slope was intensively farmed, mainly for cereals; field sizes were correspondingly large and there was little tree cover. Some Cotswold characteristics were present within this area, particularly drystone walls at field boundaries and buildings in the Cotswold vernacular, but the quality of the landscape was considered to be lower than that found elsewhere within the AONB.

7. Between Moreton-in-Marsh, Broadwell and Oddington (Gloucestershire) – a relatively flat, low-lying tract of countryside between high ground south of Broadwell and the present northern boundary, which was marked by the Oxford to Worcester railway line. The revised boundary as proposed would have retained Broadwell village and its immediate environs within the AONB.

8. Between Bredon Hill and Dumbleton Hill (Hereford and Worcester/Gloucestershire) – the existing AONB boundary included part of the Carrant Brook valley between the prominent limestone outliers of Bredon Hill and Dumbleton Hill. The A435 trunk road ran through the middle of this corridor. Agricultural practices had had an impact on the landscape of the valley floor; one consequence of these changes was the paucity of trees and hedgerows.

9. Eastern boundary from Yatton Keynell to Sherston (Wiltshire) – agricultural changes were the main factors affecting the appearance of this area, both in terms of increased field size, with a corresponding loss of walls and hedges, and the conversion of grazing land to arable cultivation. As with the area proposed for deletion east of Aldsworth, some Cotswold characteristics were present, notably in settlements, where the Cotswold vernacular dominated over other building styles; it was to be noted, however, that the influence of Cotswold stone on the built environment extended well beyond the present eastern boundary of the AONB in Wiltshire.

A number of smaller areas were also proposed for inclusion within the AONB. These were:

- north east of Cirencester
- part of the Avon Valley, west of Malmesbury
- several areas on the escarpment in Northavon
- South of Frocester Peak
- Doverow, Hill, west of Stroud

In addition to the boundary changes outlined above, the Local Planning Authorities had proposed certain minor changes which were intended to resolve local anomalies, for example where only part of a settlement was included within the AONB, or where the exact position of the boundary was unclear from reference to the Designation Map.

55. *The response to the informal consultation exercise.* In addition to the six County Councils and nine District Councils affected by the Boundary Review, 123 organisations (national, regional and local) and 54 individuals responded to the consultation statement; and their views, and the Commission officers' consideration of them were reported to the Commission's April 1987 meeting⁶⁴ in paper 87/20 and its two annexes. The summary of the response highlighted a number of points:

- i. general support for the inclusion of Minchinhampton and Rodborough Commons (Area 1 in the Statement), Oxenton and Dixton Hills (Area 2), and the Chipping Norton to the Minster Lovell area (Area 5);

- ii. local support for the proposed extensions in Warwickshire (Areas 3 and 5);
- iii. little comment on the proposals from national organisations other than those concerned with landscape and wildlife conservation. Only one objection was made from a national organisation, the Ramblers' Association (RA) which was opposed to the deletion of the corridor of lowland separating Bredon Hill from Dumbleton Hill (Area 8) and the area east of Aldsworth (Area 6);
- iv. several regional and local bodies opposed both major and minor deletions – the residents of Battledown Hill, Cheltenham, and Grittleton Parish Council with its local MP (with respect to part of Area 9);
- v. a minority of local landowners and businesses objected to minor extensions, because of their fears over development constraints that AONB designation could bring.

56. Further additions to the AONB were suggested by a number of organisations and individuals, and these included:

- the lower part of the main escarpment in Northavon, proposed by the District Council, Parish Councils (PCs) and amenity organisations
- the same lower part of the escarpment, with some urban edge areas in Stroud District, proposed by the DC, and some local organisations
- a small area below the escarpment, at Upton St Leonards proposed by the PC and individuals
- Edge Hill and Brailes Hill in Warwickshire, proposed by Warwickshire CC, Stratford-on-Avon DC and CPRE Warwickshire
- several areas in West Oxfordshire adjoining the Commission's proposed extension (Area 5) around Minster Lovell, Charlbury and Chipping Norton proposed by CPRE Oxfordshire
- an extensive area between Kemble Airfield and Malmesbury, proposed by Wiltshire CC, and supported by Malmesbury Civic Trust
- and various extensions around Bredon Hill, proposed by PCs and individuals.

57. Significantly too, the public consultation confirmed that while there was firm local support for the extensions proposed, reaction to the deletions was generally unfavourable.

58. Commission Officers, led by Richard Lloyd, the South-West Regional Officer, considered all the comments received, including making further visits to most of the areas, and recommended to the Commission, in Paper⁶⁴ 87/20, that changes be made to the boundaries proposed in the 1986 consultation statement as follows:

- *the lower escarpment in Northern and Stroud District*; here the officers recommended, further additions (as suggested by the DCs etc) to include the lower slopes, following road and settlement edges wherever possible, but in the few cases, using

field boundaries where there are no other features marking the break between the Vale and the bottom of the scarp

- *the dip slope in Gloucestershire, Oxfordshire and Wiltshire*; the officers accepted the difficulty of making judgements in the transition zones from the Cotswold Hills to the Thames Valley or to the Ironstone Downs to the north-east. Taking into account landform, geology and the specific "Cotswolds" review criteria, they re-affirmed that the public consultation boundaries were broadly correct, and suggested only minor amendments – the addition of land between Chastleton and Adlestrop, the addition of land in the Evenlode Valley between Long Hanborough and Hanborough Station, and the retention in the AONB of a small area north of Broadwell, proposed for deletion as part of the consultation statement Area 7
- *the northern Cotswold spur from the Oxfordshire – Warwickshire boundary to Edge Hill* – here the officers accepted that the exclusion of the narrower ridge running north of the Tysoe to include Edge Hill, from the consultation statement's extension 4, was a borderline decision, and in view of the representations made, and fresh information given, by Warwickshire CC, now considered that the visual importance of Edge Hill and its historical significance were sufficient to recommend inclusion within the AONB, together with Brailes Hill, the village of Little Wolford and its environs
- *boundary changes at urban edges*; here the officers briefly discussed the problems of delineating AONB boundaries on urban settlement "edges", and concluded that it was not appropriate for an AONB boundary to coincide with an urban edge unless the quality and character of the landscape has remained unimpaired by its proximity to urban development. With this principle in mind, the officers looked at a number of proposals for boundary change put forward during the consultation and recommended that certain small areas adjacent to Dursley, Stroud and Cheltenham should be added to the AONB, but that some areas proposed for inclusion by the local authorities, though not by the Commission, like the residential development and associated semi-urban land-uses on Battledown Hill, should remain outside the AONB.

59. After consideration of these proposals at their April 1987 meeting⁶⁴, the Commission approved their officers' recommendations, and authorised the officers to proceed to the stage of formal consultation with the local authorities; though subject to ratification of the proposed boundary in four areas (later extended to five) following a visit by two Commissioners, Mark Schreiber and John Quicke. After this visit on 22 May 1987, Richard Lloyd's note of the visit, and the Commissioners' conclusions were tabled⁶⁵ at the June 1987 Commission meeting, and noted, as follows, by the Commission. At all the sites visited local authority officers were present. At Wick, the Commissioners decided not to delete a small area below the scarp, provided Northavon DC agree to pursue a landscape improvement programme. In the M4 corridor the village of Grittleton, with its strong Cotswold character and surrounding high quality landscape was retained within the AONB. Similarly, at Wotton-Under-Edge, the Commissioners confirmed the inclusion of the town within the proposed AONB. In the Bredon Hill area, the Commissioners decided not to proceed with the deletion of the existing corridor

of land between Bredon Hill and Dumbleton Hill if the local authorities agreed to a programme of landscape improvements. Finally, at Edge Hill, the Commissioners ratified their officers' recommendation to include Edge Hill in the proposed AONB extension. The possibility of including the attractive village of Warmington within the proposed extension was also to be pursued.

60. **Formal Consultation on the Proposed Variation Order.** Following the decisions made by the Commission at their meetings in April and June 1987, the Commission then proceeded to formal consultation with the 20 local authorities affected by the Cotswolds AONB proposed Variation Order. The previously separate Southern Extension proposal was incorporated into the overall Cotswolds AONB proposed Variation Order. The closing date for responding to the formal consultation was 11 September 1987. In Gloucestershire, in addition to the County Council, the District Councils consulted were Cheltenham and Tewkesbury Borough Councils, and Cotswold and Stroud DCs, while in Avon, Bath City Council, Northavon, Kingswood and Wansdyke DCs, with the County Council were consulted. In Wiltshire, the North Wiltshire and West Wiltshire DCs were consulted with the County Council; and in Oxfordshire, West Oxfordshire and Cherwell DCs with the County Council. In Hereford and Worcester, only one district council, Wychavon DC, was consulted with the County Council, while in Warwickshire only Stratford-on-Avon DC was consulted in addition to the County Council.

61. The response from the 20 local authorities, many of which had already contributed to the informal consultation exercise, was set out in Commission Paper 87/71 and its annexes⁶⁶, considered by the Commission at its meeting in October 1987. The Commission's revised proposals, as in the Draft Cotswolds AONB Variation Order, were largely endorsed by the local authorities, though there *were objections as follows:*

a. to deletions

Cotswold DC -

land north and east of Broadwell, and to the east of Aldworth, Eastleach and Southrop

North Wiltshire DC -

land to the south of Sherston and to the east of Luckington and Alderton

Hereford & Worcester DC -

concern over the deletion of Little Comberton

b. to proposed additions

Cotswold DC -

the inclusion of the area north to Edge Hill

West Wiltshire DC -

continued opposition in principle to the Southern Extension

c. to non-inclusion of land

Cheltenham BC -

two areas on edge of Cheltenham including Battledown
Stroud BC –
areas additional to those proposed for inclusion in the Stroud Valley area
Wiltshire CC –
land north of Malmesbury to the west of the A429
North Wiltshire DC – as above

The paper made it clear that officers had considered carefully all the representations received, and concluded that the proposals, as put forward for formal consultation were sound, recommending only three changes:

- a. the retention of a small area of land within the AONB previously proposed for deletion at Southrop (Cotswold DC) to protect the environs of the River Leach and important water meadows;
- b. inclusion in the AONB of a small area at Epwell (in Cherwell DC);
- c. correction of two drafting errors around Bath.

62. The Commission, at their October 1987 meeting, agreed their officers' recommendations⁶⁶ as set out in Paper 87/71, and authorised them to proceed to the next formal stage of the process – the statutory advertisement of the intention to make, and submit to the Secretary of State for the Environment, a Variation Order for the Cotswolds AONB.

63. **Statutory Advertisement of the Cotswolds AONB (Designation) Variation Order.** Following the Commission's October 1987 decision, notices were placed, in the first week of January 1988, in the London Gazette⁶⁷ and in nineteen local newspapers circulating the areas affected by the Variation Order. These notices indicated where the proposed order, and the eight 1:25,000 scale maps showing the proposed boundaries could be inspected (at the Commission's offices and at the local authority offices) and invited representations, to be submitted by 2 March 1988.

64. Commission Paper 88/40 reviewed⁶⁸ the response, and was considered by the Commission at their meeting in June 1988. *Eighty four individual representations and two petitions from local residents were received.* However, it should be noted that five of these were representations from local authorities reiterating points they had already made at the formal consultation stage. A schedule summarising all the representations received and officer comments and recommendations relating to each was made available to Commissioners at the June meeting, and this schedule has been included with Paper 88/40, as Folio 68. Importantly no representations were received in support of the Commission's proposed deletions from the AONB.

65. *Objections to deletions* – most representations, particularly from parish councils and individuals, were objections to deletions from the AONB, and coincided with similar representations received from local authorities at the formal consultation stage. Most related to the Bricklehampton/Little Comberton area and to the area east of Aldsworth,

south-east of Eastleach Martin and south of Southrop, but a few objections were also received to the deletions proposed for the area south of Moreton-in-Marsh, north and east of Broadwell, the area south of Sherston/east of Luckington and Alderton, the area of Battledown Hill (Cheltenham) and an area at Ashton-under-Hill.

66. *Officer Assessment* – all these deletion areas were visited again by officers, except south of Sherston etc in Wiltshire where the proposed boundaries had already been agreed with Wiltshire CC officers, following objections at an earlier stage and a commission visit. At Bricklehampton/Little Comberton officers (including the author) considered Bricklehampton Hall and its environs, and a parcel of land at Little Comberton to be of such landscape significance that they recommended an adjustment of the boundary to reflect this. Although, in view of the strength of local feeling they carefully looked at the Commission's proposals for deletion in the Aldsworth and Moreton-in-Marsh areas, the officers recommended no modifications of the boundaries. At the largely developed Battledown Hill, and at land abutting Ashton-under-Hill, the officers' reappraisal of the areas merely confirmed the soundness of the Commission's proposals for deletion.

67. *Objections to proposed additions to the AONB*. Nine representations were received from landowners and builders opposing urban edge areas being added to the AONB on the grounds that the AONB would affect the development potential of their land. These objections related to small areas of land at South Stoke (Bath), Prestbury (Cheltenham), Rooksmoor (Stroud), Stroud generally, and Brockworth (Gloucester).

68. *Officer Assessment* – At South Stoke, the officers accepted that the land, while pleasant, was not of outstanding landscape quality. However, there had been a long-standing agreement between Commission officers and the local authorities to make the Green Belt and AONB boundaries coincide for administrative reasons. In submitting the Variation Order to the Secretary of State, the Commission was recommended, by its officers, that it was unlikely to object if the Secretary of State proposed to modify the AONB boundary to take account of his Inspectors' reports on the Wansdyke Environs of Bath Local Plan, the Bath City Local Plan and an appeal by Crest Homes against planning permission for residential development. At Prestbury the land in question was considered to be an integral part of the Cotswold scarp slope, while at Rooksmoor (Stroud) the land concerned was an integral part of the landscape of the Nailsworth Valley. No changes were therefore recommended. With regard to the objection which argued that the proposed boundary would restrict future housing development in the Stroud valleys generally, the officers commented that the Gloucestershire Structure Plan Review made adequate provision for housing in the Stroud area by proposing a substantial development at Eastington. On the objection to including the built-up area of Chipping Norton in the AONB, the officers argued that it was normal to include settlements, like Chipping Norton, which contributed to the character of the area, within AONBs. However, the officers did find that the final objection in this category, concerning land at Brockworth, was valid. They believed that the land was of no particular landscape significance, and could be developed for housing in the future without damage to the AONB.

69. *Further additions to the AONB* – a few representations requested further additions to the designated area covering land at Cheltenham (Battledown Hill and areas of local landscape importance); between Malmesbury and Kemble; Backbridge (Malmesbury); Alstone and Teddington; Oxfordshire (various areas north-east of the Commission's proposed extension 5); Bladon, Woodstock and Blenheim Park; and around Bredon Hill.

70. *Officer assessment* – The objections seeking additions in the Cheltenham, Malmesbury and Bredon Hill areas were all considered at the informal consultation stage, and the officers continued to see no justification for those proposals. The objection at Alstone was discovered to be based on a drafting anomaly, and corrected accordingly. At Teddington, while admitting the village was pleasant, the officers considered that most of the buildings were modern, and, reflecting views already expressed by Tewkesbury BC officers, could not justify its inclusion. The addition proposed at Bladon, Woodstock and Blenheim Park was not recommended because it was considered a further significant eastward extension of the AONB could not be justified. The acknowledged historic and scenic importance of the Park and the two adjoining settlements were protected through other conservation mechanisms.

71. In the light of their assessment of the representations, the officers recommended the Commission⁶⁸ to agree the changes as follows:

- i. retention within the AONB of small areas of land at Little Comberton, and Bricklehampton Hall and its environs;
- ii. not to designate land at Brockworth;
- iii. to modify the boundary at Teddington to exclude a new housing development and the church.

A final recommendation was made in Paper 88/40 for the Commission to make the Variation Order and to authorise the Director and the Chairman to sign and seal it for submission to the Secretary of State. The Commission agreed⁶⁸ the AONB boundary revisions recommended in Paper 88/40, but also agreed to defer the submission of the Variation Order to the Secretary of State for the Environment until his Department's requirements for supporting information had been clarified.

72. A letter from Mike Kirby, Assistant Director at the Commission to Alan Flexman⁶⁹, a Senior DOE Officer, dated 1 July 1988, provided some illumination as to what the DOE advice on supporting material was – the Commission's proposals should be presented in as full a way as possible. The Commission officers accordingly decided that the submission material should include a detailed landscape appraisal supported by photographic coverage. It was hoped that this landscape appraisal of the whole of the Cotswolds, prepared for the Commission by Cobham Resource Consultants, would provide a context for the Commission's proposals, particularly for the major changes, some of which (as this history shows) were controversial. Inevitably, the preparation of this appraisal (as well as the necessary revisions to the 1:25,000 scale designations map sheets) caused considerable delay, and it was not until 28 November 1989 that the

Variation Order, with its eight 1:25,000 map sheets, was ready to be submitted to the Secretary of State. In the meantime, Richard Lloyd, the Commission's South-West Regional Officer⁷⁰ informed the twenty local authorities involved of the preparation of the detailed landscape appraisal.

73. **Submission of the Cotswolds AONB (Designation) Variation Order, 1989 to the Secretary of State for the Environment.** Following the signing and sealing of the Variation Order, by the Commission's Chairman, Sir Derek Barber, and its Director General, Adrian Phillips⁷¹, on 28 November 1989, it was submitted on the same day to the Rt Hon Christopher Patten PC MP, then the Secretary of State for the Environment, with a covering letter, and supporting material. Two copies of the signed and sealed Order were sent with a covering letter dated 28 November 1989, from the Commission's Director General, Adrian Phillips, to the Secretary of State, together with proof of the statutory advertisement of the proposed Order (a copy of the advertisement in the London Gazette for 5 January 1988), a comprehensive report⁷² on the proposals and the various consultations, dated November 1989, and the Cobham Resource Consultants' report⁷³ on "The Cotswolds Landscape" dated October 1989. The Director General's letter of 28 November 1989 also referred, as required by statute, to the various representations received after the statutory advertisement to which the Order did not give effect, and similarly to those representations to which the Order did not give effect received from the local authorities when they were formally consulted in 1987. The letter made it clear, that although these representations, and the Commission's views thereon, were all summarised in the comprehensive report on the consultation sent to the Secretary of State, the full representations to which the Order did not give effect plus, for practical purposes, all representations, had been forwarded to the Secretary of State's officials at his Department's Directorate of Rural Affairs in Bristol with a covering letter⁷⁴, from the new Commission South-West Regional Officer, Edward Holdaway, (who had succeeded Richard Lloyd). Ed Holdaway's covering letter, with its various enclosures, which also included a file containing representations received after the statutory period, was sent on 29 November 1989.

74. Several months elapsed before the Minister of State for the Environment and Countryside, on the authority of the Secretary of State, completed his full and careful consideration of the Order, with all the observations and representations etc which had been forwarded to him by the Countryside Commission in November 1989. The letter⁷⁵ from Roger Pritchard, Head of the DOE's Countryside Division, to Adrian Phillips, the Commission's Director-General, dated 26 July 1990, made it clear that the Minister had agreed all the alterations made in the 1989 Order, with the exception of three areas, where he proposed modifications to the Commission's 1989 Order. With this letter, the Minister fulfilled the requirements by Section 87(5) of the 1949 Act, by publicising his proposed modifications, and requesting views on them by the Countryside Commission, and all the County and District Councils in the area affected by the Order. Responses were requested by 28 September, 1990.

75. The Minister's modifications were as follows (and are also shown in map form in folio 76):

- a. *to the east of Aldsworth* (near Bibury) where the Commission proposed to delete a large area of the Cotswolds dip-slope. He proposed retaining part of the area to the east of Aldsworth and south towards Fyfield on the grounds that the natural beauty was of similar quality to that of adjacent land which had been retained within the AONB;
- b. *at Bathurst* forming part of the Commission's a major southern extension of the AONB. He proposed the deletion of a very small area on the edge of the built-up area, on the grounds that the natural beauty was of poor quality;
- c. *at South Stoke* forming part of the Commission's a major southern extension to the AONB. He proposed to delete a small area on the edge of the built-up area on the grounds that the area was of poor quality and the buildings were not of Cotswold character.

76. At their meeting in September the Commission considered a paper⁷⁶ (90/60) on the Minister's proposed modifications, and their officers' assessment of those proposals. In their assessment the officers made clear their view that the Minister's proposed modifications were relatively minor, and did not raise significant matters of principle. At Aldsworth the Commission had used clear road boundaries rather than the field boundaries proposed by the Minister, but saw no reason for challenging his new line. Cotswold DC had opposed the Commission's proposal to exclude the area at Aldsworth, and undoubtedly welcomed the Minister's proposed boundary which considerably reduced the area excluded from the AONB.

77. At Bathford and South Stoke, on the fringes of Bath, the Commission had chosen to draw the AONB boundary to coincide with the Green Belt (rather than exactly reflecting landscape quality), as the two boundaries did for most of their length of the limit of the built-up area around Bath. It was believed that local authorities would be concerned that the AONB and Green Belt boundaries would not coincide. Indeed, Avon County Council did object to the exclusion of part of the area at South Stoke from the AONB and the Secretary of State revised the boundary accordingly (see para 79 below).

78. The Commission were recommended to make no objection to the modifications, but were requested to convey to the Minister the point about clear and coincident AONB and Green Belt boundaries where only small distances separated them. These recommendations were accepted by the Commission⁷⁶.

79. **Confirmation of the Cotswolds AONB (Designation) Variation Order 1989 by the Secretary of State on 21 December 1990.** Following his consideration of the observations and representations received on his proposed modifications to the Order as set out in his letter of 26 July 1990 (para 75 above), the Secretary of State for Environment, then Michael Heseltine, finally confirmed the Order and his modifications, with the exception of the modification at South Stoke, where he revised the boundary to bring back a small area of sufficient natural beauty into the AONB. Roger Pritchard's letter⁷⁷ to Adrian Phillips, the Director-General of the Commission, dated 21 December

1990 sets out the Secretary of State's decision, and included the confirmation document signed on the same date by Roger Pritchard as Assistant Secretary DOE, on the authority of the Secretary of State, and also the modification maps with the revision at South Stoke.

80. The Countryside Commission's Press Release⁷⁸ of 12 February 1991, issued over a month after the confirmation, indicated that the size of the AONB had been increased by 30% - from 1,507 square kilometres to 1,990 square kilometres, and was the second largest (but see para 88 below) of the then 38 AONBs in England and Wales. The map (Map 4 of this history) issued with the Press Release showed the major areas added to the AONB, and the small number of areas where deletions had been confirmed. The main areas added were - an extensive area of Oxfordshire, taking in the Evenlode Valley around Charlbury and Chipping Norton; an equally extensive area of Warwickshire, running north along the secondary Cotswold scarp as far north as Edge Hill, and also including the northern outliers of the main Cotswold scarp, Meon and Ilmington Hills; extensive additional areas of Gloucestershire, including the outlier of Oxenton Hill, the Hidcote and Ebrington Hill area, joining the Warwickshire outliers to the main scarp, areas of Rodborough and Minchinhampton Commons to the south-east of Stroud, the foot of the main Cotswolds scarp south of the Stroud including the old market town of Wotton-under-Edge; and the substantial southern extension around Bath, taking in areas of Wiltshire, and what was then Avon The major deletions confirmed were to the east of Aldsworth (where DOE had reduced the area excluded), south of Moreton-in-Marsh, where a flat area of the Upper Evenlode valley had been excluded; and to the south-east of the village of Sherston, where agricultural land had been excluded.

82. A new "Greater" Cotswolds AONB had emerged, taking in much of the land which, in 1966, CPRE and some local authorities regarded as "unfinished business" which would be taken up as proposed extensions to the AONB in due course. It is interesting to note that despite the Commission's boundary review promoting deletions as well as additions, the few major deletions confirmed stemmed from proposals by the Commission, and not from the local authorities.

83. The Cotswolds Boundary Review had clearly been successful in extending AONB protection to the whole of the nationally important landscape of the Greater Cotswolds, but like the similar review for the Chilterns AONB, had proved to be particularly costly in the use of staff and other resources. With the agreement of the Government of the day the planned programme of AONB boundary reviews was discontinued in 1990, with only two major reviews (for the Cotswolds itself and the Chilterns) and one minor review (for the Mendip Hills) completed.

84. **Administration 1991 - 2004.** With the confirmation of the Cotswolds AONB (Designation) Variation Order in 1990, the expansion of the AONB brought several more local authorities into the AONB, and the Cotswolds AONB Joint Advisory Committee (JAC) was duly reconstituted in 1991, with representatives from the six counties of Avon . . . , Gloucestershire, Oxfordshire, Warwickshire, Hereford and Worcester and Wiltshire, and fourteen district (Borough, City and District) councils plus a number of other statutory and voluntary agencies including the Countryside Commission, English Nature, CPRE, Country Landowners' Association, NFU, MAFF,

Forestry Commission, County Naturalists' Trusts, Council for the Gloucestershire Countryside and the Heart of England Tourist Board. The JAC's remit continued to be "to advise and co-ordinate to achieve the effective management of the AONB". Gloucestershire County Council continued to be the host authority for the reconstituted JAC, and also for the Technical Officers' Working Party (TOWP) supporting the JAC. Peter Secombe became the first AONB officer in 1992, with specific responsibility for updating and developing the earlier AONB management strategy, and he was succeeded by Roy Higginbottom in 1996. The Cotswolds Warden Service, with over 200 wardens, continued to act as the voluntary arm of the Cotswold Countryside Service, with its six full-time rangers and three administrative staff. Local Government reorganisation in 1996, which became effective in April 1998 meant that the Avon representative was replaced by representatives from the new South Gloucestershire and Bath & North-East Somerset unitary councils. Worcestershire County Council also replaced the old Hereford and Worcester County Council, in Worcestershire in 1998. John Workman was the last Chairman of the JAC.

85. In 1999 the Cotswolds AONB JAC was replaced by the new Cotswolds AONB Partnership, and moved to a new host authority, the Cotswold DC, and new offices at the Old Police Station, Northleach. The Partnership's President is Lord Plumb, and its Chairman, Niel Curwen, who heads a Partnership of 17 local authorities and 17 local, regional and national organisations representing farmers, landowners, communities, tourism, amenity, wildlife trusts, and Government agencies. The Partnership's remit is to:

- conserve and enhance the Cotswolds AONB
- promote sustainable development and appropriate quiet enjoyment
- enable provision to be made for recreation where it is consistent with the conservation of natural beauty and the needs of agriculture, forestry and other uses
- promote public and political awareness and support for the Cotswolds AONB
- enhance the relevance of the Cotswolds AONB to all who live and work in and around, or visit, the area.

The AONB core Staff Team of seven are headed by Martin Lane, the AONB Director, and have already prepared (by updating and reviewing the JAC's 1996 AONB Management Strategy) the AONB's first Management Plan, as required by Section 89 of the Countryside and Rights of Way (CROW) Act 2000. Though the work of the Cotswold Voluntary Wardens is guided by a part-time Volunteer Co-ordinator, its 270 wardens are all voluntary. A Partnership Steering Group, Advisory Group and Topic Working Groups also exist to guide and assist with the work of the Partnership, which, in terms of action on the ground, includes both high profile "umbrella" initiatives as well as purely local initiatives delivering specific management plan objectives.

86. By late autumn 2004 it is planned that the successful Cotswolds AONB Partnership will in turn evolve into the Cotswolds AONB Conservation Board, established under Section 88 of the CROW Act 2000.

87. **Future Changes to the AONB Boundary.** It seems most likely, given the comprehensive nature of the 1980s' Boundary Review, its massive resource costs, and the general acceptance of the Boundary changes confirmed by the Secretary of State in 1990, that the boundaries of the Cotswolds AONB will remain unchanged. Nevertheless the Countryside Agency (which replaced the Commission in 1999) and the Government still have powers, now under Section 83(7) of the CROW Act, to vary AONB boundaries, and the official policy is that where there is consensus or where need is established, local variations of boundaries will be considered.

88. Finally, it must be stated that following a 1991 re-measurement of the areas of all AONBs using modern methods, the "official" area of the Cotswolds AONB (as shown at Map 5) increased from 1990 square kilometres to 2038 square kilometres, making it the largest of the 41 AONBs, and thus the second largest designated landscape after the Lake District National Park (2292 square kilometres) in England and Wales.

Files

The following files have been consulted in the writing of this history:

Title	National Parks Commission or Countryside Commission Number	Public Record Office Number
Cotswolds Designation	AB/9 Part 1	COU1/949
Cotswolds Designation	AB/9 Part 2	COU1/950
Cotswolds AONB Formal Consultation with Local Authorities	AB/9/A	COU1/1245
Cotswolds AONB Advertisement and Preparation of Order	AB/9/B	COU1/1246
Cotswolds AONB Submission of Order to Minister	AB/9/C	COU1/1132
Cotswolds AONB	AB/9/E	COU1/951
Cotswolds AONB Representations by Cheltenham BC	AB/9/A/9	COU1/274
Cotswolds AONB Representations by Oxford CC	AB/9/A/7	COU1/275
Cotswolds AONB Proposal by Oxfordshire County Council For the Extension of the Boundary	V/36	COU6/107
Informal Proposals for New AONBs	V/154/1551A	
Cotswolds AONB Proposed Southern Extension	SW/V/8/1 Part A	N/A
Cotswolds AONB Proposed Southern Extension	SW/V/8/1 Part B	N/A
Cotswolds AONB Proposed Southern Extension	SW/V/8/1 Part C	N/A
Cotswolds AONB Informal Public Consultation	SW/V/8/4 Part A	N/A
Cotswolds AONB Boundary Review Consultations	SW/V/8/3 Part A	N/A

Title	National Parks Commission or Countryside Commission Number	Public Record Office Number
Cotswolds AONB Preliminary Consultation with Local Authorities	SW/V/8/3 Part B	N/A
Cotswolds AONB Boundary Review – Statutory Advertisement	SW/V/8/6	N/A
Cotswolds AONB Boundary Review: Submission to the Secretary of State	SW/V/8/7 Part A	N/A
Cotswolds AONB Boundary Review After Submission to Secretary of State	SW/V/8/8	N/A

References

1. "Report of the National Park Committee", (Chairman, The Rt. Hon Christopher Addison MP, MD), The Treasury, Cmd 3851, HMSO, London 1931.
2. J. B. Priestley "English Journey", William Heinemann Ltd, in association with Victor Gollancz Ltd, 1934.
3. The Standing Committee on National Parks, "The Case for National Parks in Great Britain", London, July 1938.
4. John Dower, "National Parks in England and Wales", Cmd 6628, HMSO, London, May 1945.
5. The National Parks Committee (Chairman Sir Arthur Hobhouse), "Report of the National Parks Committee (England and Wales)", Cmd 7121, HMSO, London, July 1947.
6. Letter from W. H. Giffard, Hon. Secretary, CPRE Gloucestershire, to the NPC Secretary, dated 12 March 1957, requesting urgent designation of the Cotswolds as an AONB (Folio 4, NPC file AB/9/Part 1 - TNA file COU 1/949).
7. National Parks Commission "Minutes of the 46th meeting of the NPC Committee B (1131) held on 26 March, 1957".
8. Letter from J. Locke of the NPC, to W. H. Giffard, Hon. Secretary CPRE Gloucestershire, dated 5 April 1957, indicating it will be some time before the NPC consider the designation of the Cotswolds AONB. (Folio 6 NPC file AB/9/Part 1 - TNA file COU1.949).
9. Letter from D. G. Duff, Secretary NFU Gloucestershire, to Harold Abrahams NPC Secretary, dated 24 October 1957 requesting an address to the NFU Branch on AONB policies. (Folio 12 NPC file AB/9/Part 1 - TNA file COU1/949).
10. Letter from Eric L. Higgins, Gloucestershire County Planning Officer, to the NPC Secretary, dated 16 January 1958, requesting a visit from an NPC Officer to discuss the Cotswolds AONB Proposal. (Folio 25 NPC file AB/9/Part 1 - TNA file COU1/949).
11. National Parks Commission "Minutes of the 55th meeting of the NPC Committee B (1344) held on 25 February 1958".
12. National Parks Commission "Minutes of the 88th meeting of the NPC (1283) held on 26 February 1958".

13. Letter from N. H. Calvert, NPC Officer, to the Gloucestershire County Planning Officer, dated 5 March 1958, giving the NPC's reply to the County Planning Officer's letter of 16 January 1958. (Folio 32 NPC file AB/9/Part 1 - TNA file COU1/949).

14. Note for the file by B. W. Watkin dated 17 April 1958, relating to the meeting on 15 April 1958 between NPC Officers and Mr Burke, the Gloucestershire Deputy County Planning Officer. (Folio 35 NPC file AB/9/Part 1 - TNA file COU1/949).

15. Letter from Guy Davies, Clerk to the Gloucestershire County Council, to the NPC Secretary dated 24 September 1958, suggesting a Conference of local planning authorities and the NPC to discuss the Cotswolds AONB proposal. (Folio 36 NPC file AB/9/Part 1 - TNA file COU1/949).

16. Note from B. W. Watkin (NPC field adviser) to L. J. Watson (NPC senior field adviser), dated 31 October 1958, giving his views on the four County Councils' boundaries for the proposed AONB. (Folio 49 NPC file AB/9/Part 1 - TNA file COU1/949).

17. Gloucestershire County Council Officers' notes of meeting on the proposed Cotswolds AONB held at Shire Hall, Gloucester, on 14 November 1958, between the officers of four county councils and the NPC. (Folio 56A NPC file AB/9/Part 1 - TNA file COU1/949).

18. Letter from NPC Secretary to Guy Davies, Clerk of the Gloucestershire CC, dated December, 1958, suggesting corrections to the County Council Officers' note of the meeting on 14 November 1958. (Folio 58 NPC file AB/9/Part 1 - TNA file COU1/949).

19. Note from L. J. Watson (Senior NPC field adviser) to N. H. Calvert (NPC officer) dated 24 November 1958 discussing extension of the Cotswolds proposed AONB northwards. (Folio 54 NPC file AB/9/Part 1 - TNA file COU1/949).

National Parks Commission "Minutes of the 63rd meeting of NPC Committee B 01(2) held on 25 November 1958".

National Parks Commission "Minutes of the 96th meeting of the NPC (1463) held 26 November 1958".

Letter from Guy Davies, Clerk of the Gloucestershire CC to Harold Abrahams, NPC Secretary, dated 2 February 1959, giving the Council's views on a proposed Advisory Committee. (Folio 62 NPC file AB/9/Part 1 - TNA file COU1/949).

20. Letter from J. E. Common, Hon. General Secretary of the RA, to the NPC Secretary, dated 17 March 1959, criticising the omission of the Southern Cotswolds to the Valley from the proposed AONB. (Folio 65 NPC file AB/9/part 1 - TNA file COU1/949).

24. National Parks Commission "Minutes of the 106th meeting of the NPC (1679) held on 28 October 1959".
25. Letter from W. H. Giffard, the Hon. Secretary of CPRE Gloucestershire, to Harold Abrahams, the NPC Secretary, dated 25 July 1961, requesting him to designate the Cotswolds as an AONB. (Folio 75 NPC file AB/9/Part 1 - TNA file COU1/949).
26. Letter from Harold Abrahams, the NPC Secretary, to W. H. Giffard, Hon. Secretary CPRE Gloucestershire, dated 8 August 1961, relating to the slow progress of the Cotswolds AONB proposal. (Folio 77 NPC file AB/9/Part 1 - TNA file COU1/949).
27. National Parks Commission "Minutes of the 133rd meeting of the NPC (2239) held on 27/28 February 1962".
28. National Park Commission, Paper B/50, Proposed Cotswolds AONB, prepared by L. J. Watson, the NPC Senior field adviser, for the purpose of the NPC inspection of the provisional AONB boundaries on 25/26 May 1962. (Un-numbered folio attached to rear of NPC file AB/9/A - TNA file COU1/1245).
29. Letter from Brunsdon Yapp, NPC member, to Mr. Marshall, NPC Officer, dated 29 April 1962, giving additional views on the provisional AONB boundaries. (Folio 91 NPC file AB/9/Part 1 - TNA file COU1/949).
30. National Parks Commission "Minutes of the 136th meeting of the NPC (2372) held on 26/27 June 1962".
31. Letter to the Clerk of Gloucestershire CC (similar to letters also sent to the Clerks of Worcestershire, Oxfordshire and Wiltshire CCs) from H. W. Marshall, NPC Officer, dated 1 October 1962, asking for informal comments on the proposed Cotswolds AONB boundaries. (Folio 110 NPC file AB/9/Part 1 - TNA file COU1/949).
32. National Parks Commission "Minutes of the 143rd meeting of the NPC (2602) held on 26/27 February 1963" with NPC Paper B/197, Proposed Cotswolds AONB, Informal Consultations, HFD, 20/2/63. (Folio 132 NPC file AB/9/Part 1 - TNA file COU1/949).
33. Memo for file by L. J. Watson, NPC Senior field adviser, dated 25 February 1963 on his conversation with Mr Cooper the Wiltshire County Planning Officer, relating to the Wiltshire section of the AONB. (Folio 131 NPC file AB/9/Part 1 - TNA file COU1/949).
34. Letter from Kenneth Cooper, the Wiltshire County Planning Officer, to Miss H. Douglas, NPC officer dated 12 March 1963 giving comments on the provisional AONB boundary and asking about the effects of AONB designation on hunting. (Folio 6 NPC file AB/9/Part 2 - TNA file COU1/950).

35. Letter from Miss H. Douglas, NPC Officer, to Kenneth Cooper, the Wiltshire County Planning Officer, dated 19 March 1963, saying that AONB designation need not have any effect on hunting. (Folio 8 NPC file AB/9/Part 2 - TNA file COU1/950).

36. L. J. Watson, NPC Senior Field Adviser, Note, dated 3 May 1963, on NPC inspection of Bredon Hill area on 28 April 1963. (Folio 14 NPC file AB/9/Part 2 - TNA file COU1/950).

37. National Parks Commission "Minutes of the 146th meeting of the NPC (2683) held on 21/22 May 1963".

38. L. J. Watson, NPC Senior field adviser, file note, dated 10 June 1963, of his meeting with Mr. Cooper Wiltshire County Planning Officer, at Trowbridge on 7 June 1963. (Folio 19 NPC file AB/9/Part 2 - TNA file COU1/950).

39. L. J. Watson, NPC Senior field adviser, file note dated 17 June 1963, of his meeting with Mr. Pridham and Mr. Burke, Deputy County Planning Officers of Worcestershire and Gloucestershire respectively, held at Shire Hall, Gloucester, on 13 June 1963, to further discuss AONB boundaries. (Folio 22 NPC file AB/9/Part 2 - TNA file COU1/950).

40. National Parks Commission "Minutes of the 147th meeting of the NPC (2721) held on 25/26 June, 1963".

41. Letter from M. F. B. Bell, NPC Secretary, to the Clerk of Wiltshire CC, dated 13 May 1964, consulting the CC formally on the Cotswolds AONB boundaries - together with the list of all 25 local authorities affected by the AONB proposal, which had received the same formal consultation letter. (Folio 4 and 1 on NPC file AB/9/A - TNA file COU1/1245).

42. Letter from Miss. H. Douglas for the NPC Secretary, to the Clerk of Warwickshire CC, dated 18 February 1964, forewarning the CC of the imminent formal consultation. (Folio 47 NPC file AB/9/Part 2 - TNA file COU1/950).

43. National Parks Commission - NPC Paper B/518 Cotswolds AONB (M.E.H. 20/1/65) - Record of Responses to Formal Consultation Process - as reported to the NPC at their meeting in January 1965. (Un-numbered folio NPC file AB/9/B - TNA file COU1/1246).

44. National Parks Commission "Minutes of the 163rd meeting of the NPC (3282) held on 26/27 January 1965".

45. Letter from Guy Davies, Clerk of Gloucestershire CC to NPC Secretary, dated 26 January 1965, relating to the representations on the AONB boundary by Oxfordshire CC. (Folio 142 NPC file AB/9/A - TNA file COU1/1245).

46. Letter from Miss Chesterman, NPC officer, to the Clerk of Oxfordshire CC, dated 26 August 1965, explaining why the NPC had rejected the CC's representation. (Folio 6 NPC file AB/9/A/7 - TNA file COU1/275)/
47. Letter from Miss Chesterman, NPC Officer, to the Town Clerk, Cheltenham MBC, dated 26 August 1965, explaining why the NPC had rejected the MBC's representations. (Folio 5 NPC file AB/9/A/9 - TNA file COU1/274).
48. National Parks Commission, NPC Paper B/667, setting out the 1965 correspondence on the Cotswolds AONB between the CPRE and the NPC. (Un-numbered folio at rear of NPC file AB/9/B - TNA file COU1/1246).
49. National Parks Commission "Minutes of the 171st meeting of the NPC (3483) held on 26 October 1965".
50. National Parks Commission, "Advertisement of Cotswolds AONB (Designation) Order 1966, M. F. B. Bell, NPC Secretary, 18 October 1965".
51. National Parks Commission, NPC Paper B/691, "Cotswolds AONB Note of the current position regarding representations made to the Commission for amendments to the boundary of the proposed Cotswolds AONB". (Folio 108a NPC file AB/9/B - TNA file COU1/1246).
52. National Parks Commission "Minutes of the 173rd meeting of the NPC (3535) held on 21 December 1965".
53. National Parks Commission, NPC Paper B/717 "Cotswolds AONB" Appendix, representations from Cirencester RDC and the RA. (Folio 109a NPC file AB/9/B - TNA file COU1/1246).
54. National Parks Commission "Minutes of the 174th meeting of the NPC (3557) held on 25 January 1966".
55. Letter from Mervyn Bell, NPC Secretary, to the Secretary MHLG, dated 7 March 1966, sent as covering letter with the Cotswolds AONB (Designation) Order, signed and sealed on 22 February, 1966, and a copy of the notice stating effect of Order, copies of the observations of local authorities to which the order as submitted did not give effect, together with a statement giving the Commission's comments thereon, and copies of representations from other persons or bodies to which the order as submitted did not give effect, together with a statement giving the Commission's comments thereon. (Folio 2 NPC file AB/9/C - TNA file COU1/1132).
56. Letter From Anne McNichol, MHLG Assistant Secretary, to the NPC Secretary, dated 19 August 1966, sent as a covering letter with the Cotswolds AONB (Designation) Order 1966, which had been confirmed by the Minister of Housing and Local Government, the Rt. Hon. Anthony Greenwood MP (Folio 1, NPC file AB/9/E - TNA

file COU1/951, but the Order, as signed, on behalf of the Minister by Anne McNichol is held by the Countryside Agency, at John Dower House).

57. MHLG Press Release No 208 "COTSWOLDS AREA OF OUTSTANDING NATURAL BEAUTY Minister Confirms Order," MHLG Whitehall, London, 23 August, 1966 (Folio 1 NPC file AB/9/E - TNA file COU1/951).

58. Countryside Commission, CP 82/69 "Cotswolds AONB: Proposed Southern Extension" November 1982, with Minute "M6035" of the 150th meeting of the Countryside Commission (M6035) held on 2 December 1982.

59. Countryside Commission, CP 84/21, "AONB Boundary Review" March 1984, with Minute "M84/21" of the 161st meeting of the Countryside Commission held on 5 April 1984.

60. Countryside Commission, CP 85/19, "Cotswolds AONB Review of Boundaries", March 1985, with Minute "M85/38" of the 167th meeting of the Countryside Commission held on 4 April 1985.

61. Countryside Commission, CP 85/46, "Cotswolds AONB Boundary Review", July 1985 with Minute "M85/98" of the 169th meeting of the Countryside Commission (M85/98) held on 1 August 1985".

62. Countryside Commission CP 86/26, "Cotswolds AONB Boundary Review", March 1986, with Minute "M86/44" of the 173rd meeting of the Countryside Commission held on 3 April 1986".

63. Countryside Commission "Cotswolds AONB - Review of Boundaries Consultation Statement" September 1986.

64. Countryside Commission, CP 87/20 "Cotswolds AONB: Boundary Review", March 1987, with two related Minutes numbered "M87/28" from the 180th (2 April 1987) and the 181st (4 June 1987) meetings of the Countryside Commission.

65. Countryside Commission, "Cotswolds AONB Boundary Review - Note of Commission Visit 22 May 1987" Richard Lloyd 22 May 1987. This visit was reported on by the two Countryside Commissioners involved, Mr Schreiber and Mr Quicke at the 181st meeting of the Commission, on 4 June 1987. Minute "M87/28" for the meeting, refers and is found with folio 64.

66. Countryside Commission, CP 87/71, "Cotswolds AONB Boundary Review, Formal Consultation on Proposed Boundary Changes" September 1987, with Minute "M87/96" of the 183rd meeting of the Commission, held on 1 October 1987.

67. The London Gazette 5 January 1988 - "Notice of the proposed Cotswolds AONB (designation) Variation Order, 1988", Adrian Phillips, Director, Countryside Commission 15 December 1987.

68. Countryside Commission CP 88/40, "Cotswolds AONB Boundary Review - Statutory Advertisement of the Commission's Proposals", May, 1988, with "M88/49" of the 187th meeting of the Commission held on 2 June 1988.
69. Letter from Mike Kirby, Assistant Director, Countryside Commission to Alan Flexman, DOE, dated 1 July 1988, relating to the Cotswolds AONB Boundary Review, and indicating that additional material on the presentation of the Commission's case would be forthcoming (Un-numbered folio CC file SW/V/8/7/ Part A).
70. Letter from Richard Lloyd, Head National Parks and Planning Branch - Countryside Commission, to the County Engineer, Hereford & Worcester CC (an identical letter was sent to all 20 local authorities), dated 24 July 1988, on the Cotswolds AONB Boundary Review, indicating that the Commission had decided to make four further changes to the proposed Variation Order (Un-numbered folio CC file SW/V/8/7/ Part A).
71. Letter from Adrian Phillips, Director-General, Countryside Commission to the Rt. Hon. Christopher Patten PCMP, Secretary of State for the Environment, dated 28 November 1989, accompanying the submission of the Cotswolds AONB (Designation) Variation Order 1989, with enclosures (Un-numbered folio in CC file SW/V/8/7 Part A).
72. Countryside Commission - Copy of "Cotswolds AONB Boundary Review, Description of Proposals and Report on Consultation", November 1989 (as sent as enclosure to Secretary of State with covering letter from Adrian Phillips dated 28 November 1989 - Ref 71). (Un-numbered folio contained in file envelope attached to CC file SW/V/8/7 Part A).
73. Countryside Commission "The Cotswold landscape - a landscape assessment of an area of outstanding natural beauty prepared for the Countryside Commission by Cobham Resource Consultants" 1990.
74. Letter from Edward Holdaway, SW Regional Officer, to Roger Pritchard, Directorate of Rural Affairs, DOE, dated 29 November 1989 covering the dispatch of more material eg files with representations etc relating to the submission of the Cotswolds AONB Variation Order 1989 to DOE on 28 November 1989. (Un-numbered folio CC file SW/V/8/7 Part A).
75. Letter from Roger Pritchard, Countryside Division, DOE, to Adrian Phillips, Countryside Commission, dated 26 July 1990, setting out the Minister of State's proposed modifications to the Cotswolds AONB (Designation) Variation Order 1989. (Un-numbered folio CC file SW/V/8/8).
76. Countryside Commission, CP 90/60, "Cotswolds AONB - Boundary Review", August 1990, with Minute "M90/77", from the Minutes of 200th meeting of the Commission held on 2/3 August 1990.

77. Letter from Roger Pritchard, Countryside Division, DOE, to Adrian Phillips, Countryside Commission, dated 21 December 1990, setting out Secretary of State's confirmation of Cotswolds AONB (Designation) Variation Order 1989, his consideration of representations made on his modifications, and his one revised modification at South Stoke, together with formal confirmation document, signed by Roger Pritchard, on 21 December 1990, on the authority of the Secretary of State, and accompanying maps. (Copy of formal document deposited in safe at Countryside Agency Offices, John Dower House, Cheltenham.)

78. Countryside Commission News Release NR/91/3, "Major Increase for Cotswolds AONB Confirmed", Countryside Commission, Cheltenham, 12 February 1991.

Folios

With the large number of references, some of them substantial, black hard-back, bound copies, have been produced as a three volume set, Volumes II and III being just the 78 folios. One set is held in the Countryside Agency Resource Centre Library, at John Dower House, Cheltenham, while the other is held at the Cotswolds AONB Office, at the Old Police Station, Northleach. Comb-bound copies, similarly as three volume sets, have also been produced. Versions of the history itself, without the folios, but including black-and-white copies of the five maps, and the list of references, have also been made available to other interested parties.

Maps

Map 1 - Extract from map (Scale: 20 miles to 1 inch) contained inside the back cover of the "Hobhouse" Report (ref 5 above), showing amongst other areas, the Cotswolds conservation area.

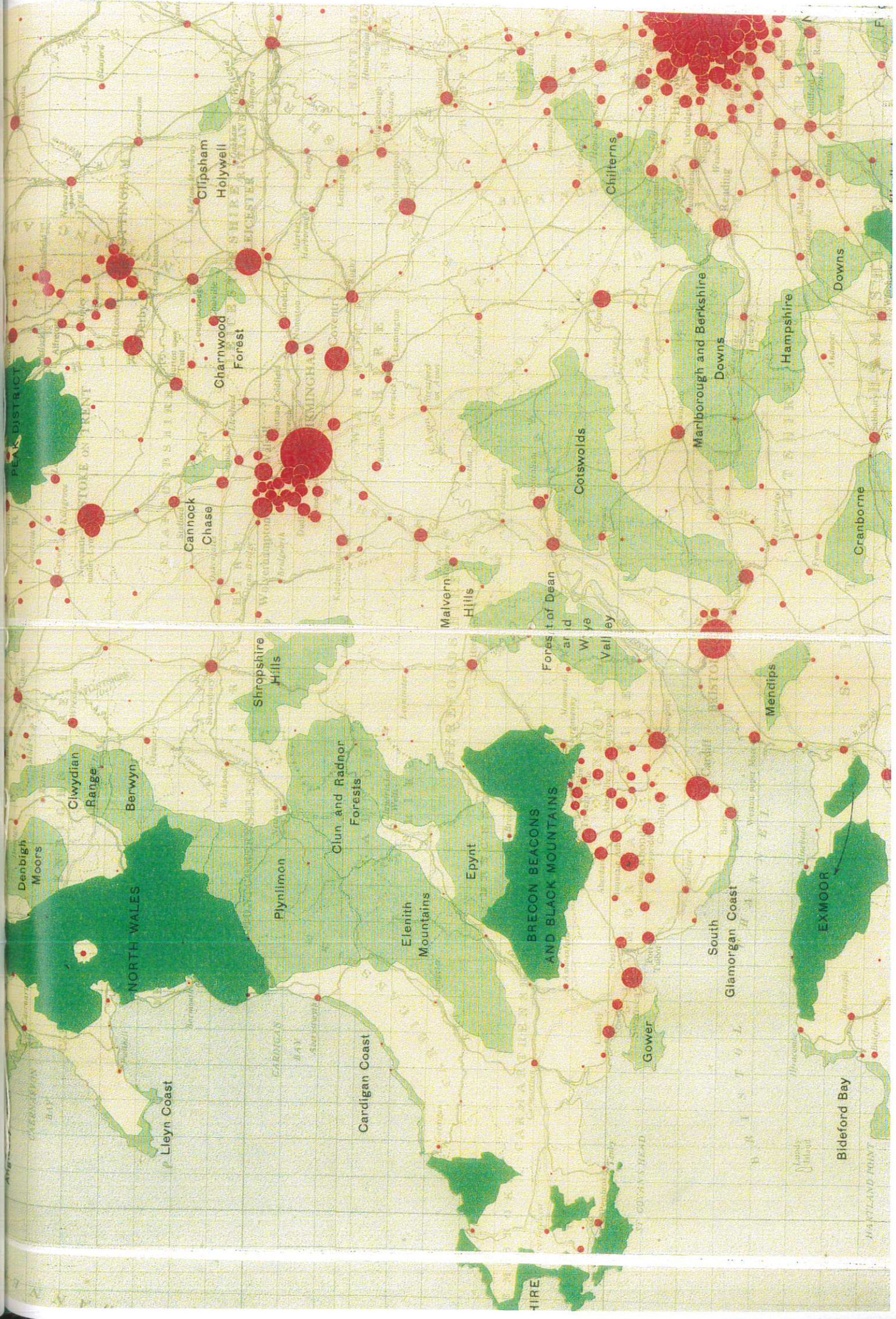
Map 2 - Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (Scale: 1- miles to 1 inch), Map on page 43 of the Seventeenth Annual Report of the NPC for the year ended September 30, 1966.

Map 3 - Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, PROPOSED SOUTHERN EXTENSION - Figure 3 from the Draft Statement of Intent by the Local Planning Authorities, July 1985 (Enclosed in file envelope - Countryside Commission file SW/V/8/1 Part B).

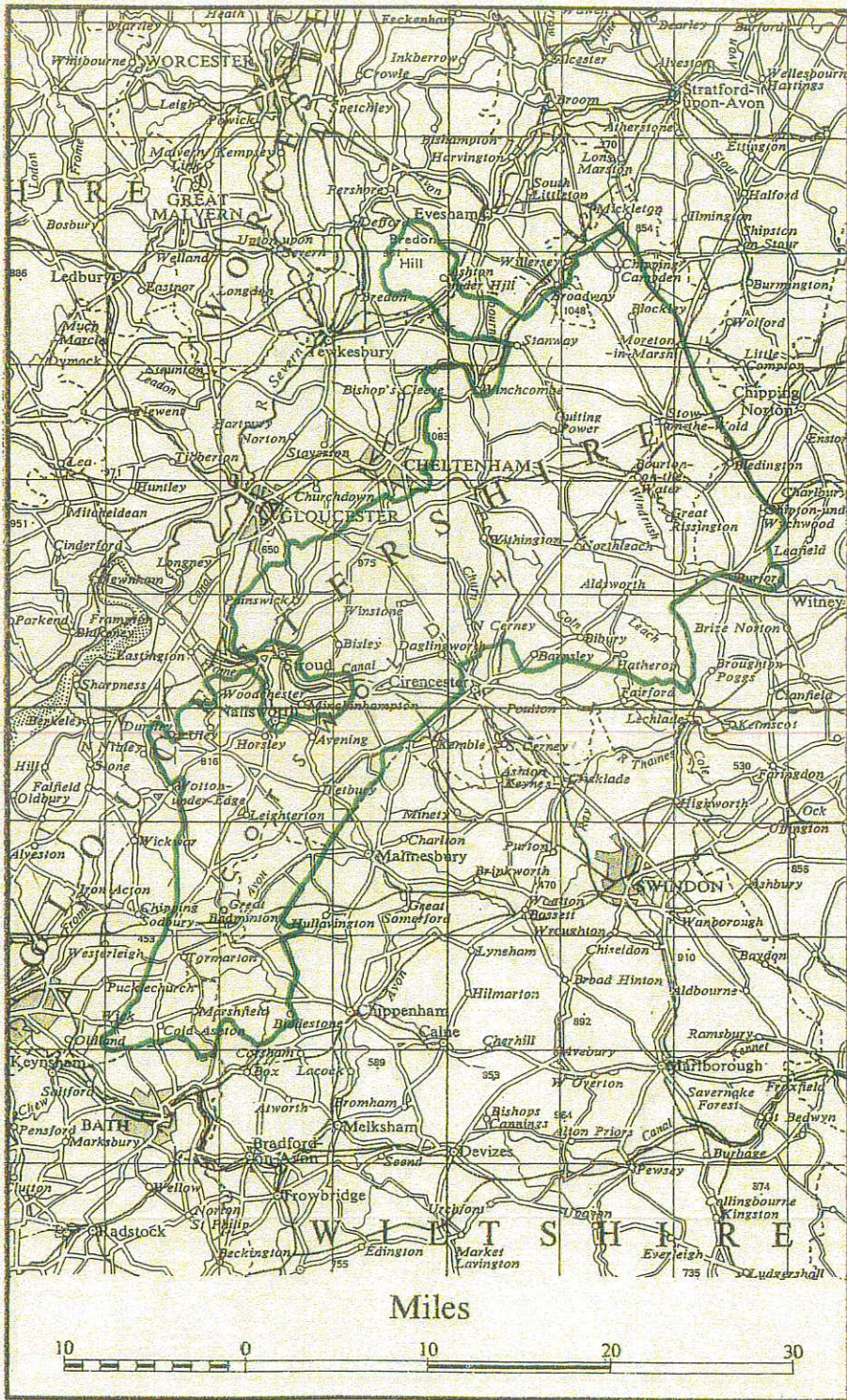
Map 4 - Cotswolds AONB revised boundary - Map accompanying Countryside Commission News Release NR/91/3, "Major Increase for Cotswolds AONB confirmed", Countryside Commission, 12 February 1991, Cheltenham (ref 78 above).

Map 5 - Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Beauty (2004) - Map from Page 2 of the "Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Partnership - Five Years of achievement 1999 - 2004", Cotswolds AONB Partnership, May 2004.

MAP 1



MAP 2



3. COTSWOLDS AREA OF OUTSTANDING NATURAL BEAUTY

MAP 3

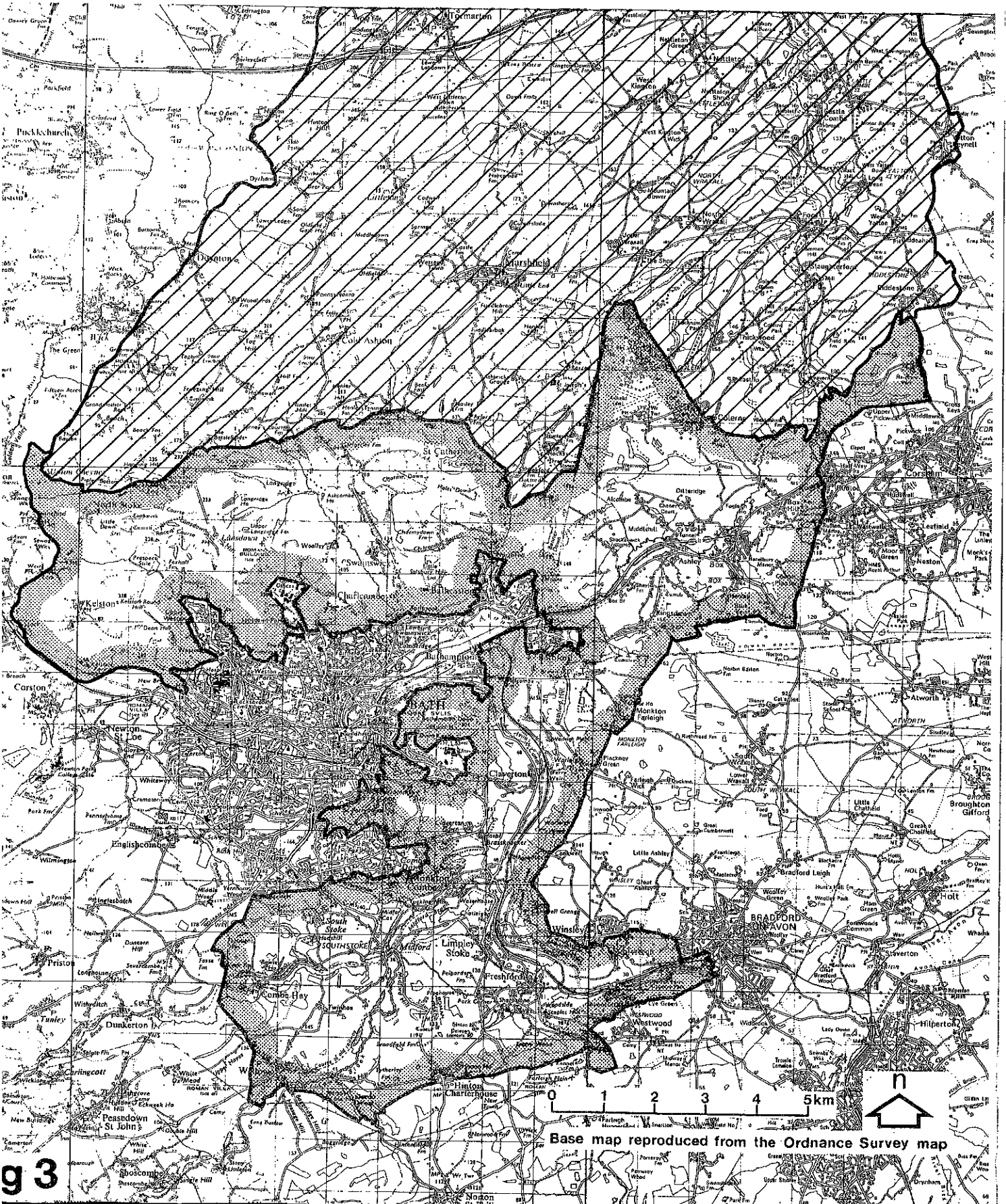
Cotswolds Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty PROPOSED SOUTHERN EXTENSION



Proposed boundary of extension



Existing boundary of AONB

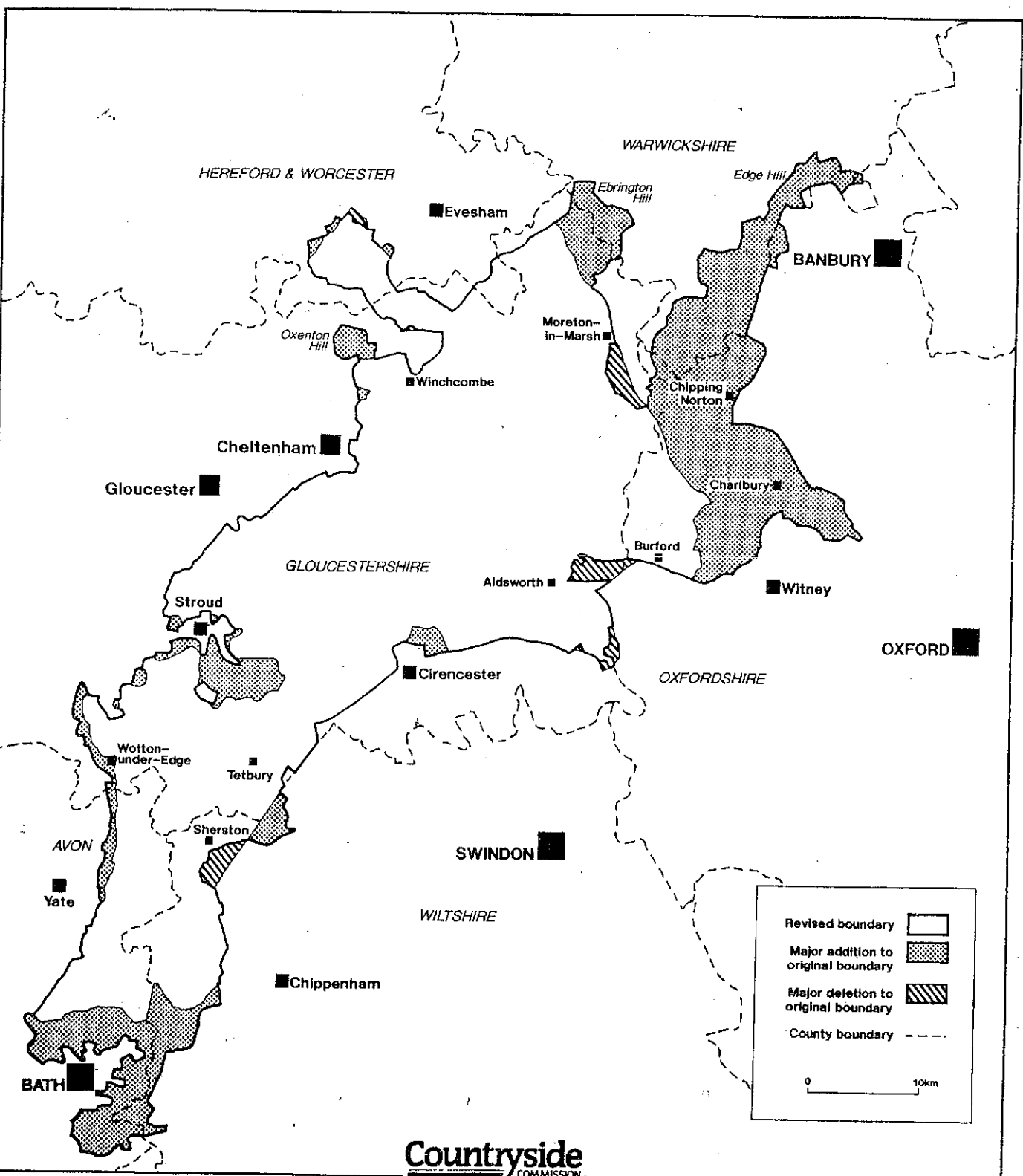


Base map reproduced from the Ordnance Survey map

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MAP 4

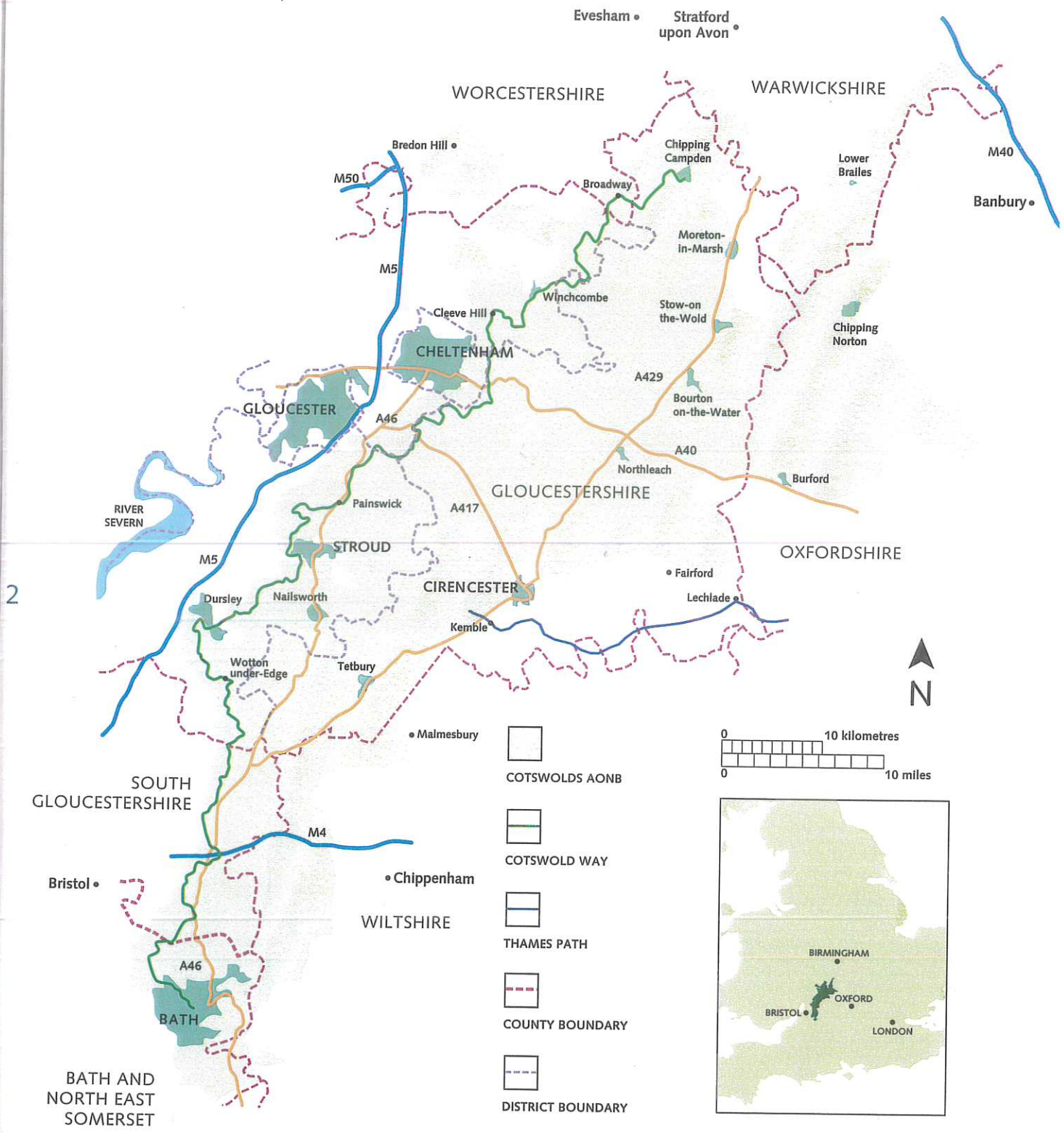
Cotswolds AONB revised boundary



Countryside
COMMISSION

MAP 5

COTSWOLDS AREA OF OUTSTANDING NATURAL BEAUTY



2