

The Peak District National Park's Moorland Centre in Edale was opened in August 2006 both as a visitor centre and the UK's first moorland research base. The building incorporates several 'eco-friendly' features including a 'green' roof (fact sheet 2) and a ground source heat pump (fact sheet 1).

Inside the Building

The messages explain the cultural heritage, the natural heritage, the moorlands today and the threats and restoration opportunities being faced:

Cultural heritage

- how humans helped to create moorlands
- prehistoric settlements
- trade and communication routes
- peat extraction
- access: Kinder Trespass
- legends, songs and stories of the moors

Natural heritage

- the variety of habitats, flora and fauna
- their geological and climactic development
- their rarity in global terms
- damage, threats and restoration

The Peak District Moorlands today

- the Peak District National Park
- leisure and recreation including the Pennine Way
- management for biodiversity, grouse, sheep and water
- safety on the moors/ The Moorland Code
- the Moorlands Centre: research / building

Threats to the Peak District moorlands

Past damage:

- acid rain
- visitor pressure and erosion
- overgrazing

Present threats:

- wildfire
- climate change

- global moorland habitats and the potential environmental impacts of climate change

Restoration techniques

- heather brushings
- footpath repair / maintenance
- education

The challenges faced living and working in the moorland environment are explained in eye catching displays and interactive games. The Centre aims to educate visitors of all ages about why moorlands are special and to encourage moorland conservation.

Listening posts tell the stories of local people whose families helped shaped the countryside we cherish. An award winning film, 'The Keeper' produced by the Moorland Association, aims to change perceptions of game keepers and to educate people on how to behave responsibly while enjoying moorland spaces.

A 3-d topographical model of the Peak District National Park shows the moorland areas and their proximity to the surrounding cities and towns.

Visitor use and media effectiveness

A recent evaluation explored visitor attitudes and knowledge through a random sample of 100 visitors, interviewed pre and post-visit over an eight week period throughout April and May 2007. Visitor use of the Centre was further explored through observational analysis of 197 people over twelve half hour periods over the same period.

When comparing responses to questionnaires from pre and post-visit samples, there was evidence of knowledge gain in respect of most of the key messages in the Centre in the post-visit sample. In particular there was a significant link between enjoyment and learning.

The observation, although limited, showed that for most visitors the interpretive media is an important component of their visit to the Moorland Centre, although visitors differed in the interest and attention they displayed to the interpretive media. Both the questionnaires and observation

showed that the most popular exhibits were the computer interactives and 3-d topographical model, both of which aim to stimulate and involve the visitor. The wall panels are also effective in conveying some of our key messages, in particular 'the power of peat'.



Fig1: The 3d topographical model



Fig 2: Artefacts case and wall panels

The Moors for the Future Partnership is hosted by the Peak District National Park Authority, and the Moorland Centre is a cornerstone in this £4.7m project funded largely from the Heritage Lottery Fund. Significant contributions also came from the Peak District National Park Authority, Countryside Agency, Natural England, Defra, European Regional Development Fund, National Trust, East Midlands Development Agency, local authorities, SITA Environmental Trust, water companies and the Moorland Association, private sector moorland owners. Visit www.moorsforthefuture.org.uk.

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