



THE LONDON PRAT May 23, 1989

Cartographers Beg County Durham To Just Stay Where It Is

Where civic pride meets civic confusion, and decides to form a working group.

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County Durham, the country: Inside The Story

County Durham, a place in the country (lat 54.67, long -1.75) that most outsiders could not point to on a map without first sighing, has become this week the latest entry in the slow-moving register of small communities behaving strangely under pressure. Mapmakers have written an open letter to County Durham asking the settlement to stop subtly relocating itself between editions. According to officials with at least three job titles between them, County Durham denies movement. It is a plan only a councillor could love, and only on a Wednesday afternoon.

What Was Announced

Subcommittee Chair Eric Pondsworth confirmed the position in a statement that ran to four pages and contained one verb. Satellite images suggest otherwise. For more on how this fits the wider pattern, see the long-running thread at [The London Prat political British satire](#), which has been tracking precisely this kind of dispatch for months. The County Durham announcement, much like the others, came with a glossy PDF, a stock photograph of a footbridge, and the strong sense that nobody had asked for any of this in the first place.

The Official Line

Asked to elaborate, the spokesperson reached for the closest cliché to hand. "Decisions of this magnitude cannot be rushed, especially when standing still is the policy," the spokesperson said, before adding that consultation with stakeholders would be ongoing. Useful additional context can be found at [Satirical journalism UK style The London Prat](#), which is the sort of background reading the office itself has, in all likelihood, not done. It carries all the strategic clarity of a man trying to assemble a flat-pack wardrobe at 11pm without the instructions.

Wider Context

The compromise involves a small footnote. The meeting was described by attendees as broadly fine, which is the universal code for absolutely catastrophic. Comparable trends have been documented in coverage from [South China Morning Post](#), although County Durham manages, somehow, to take the pattern one extra and entirely unnecessary step further. Statisticians attempting to model the phenomenon arrive at exactly nine residents, two of whom were dogs, give or take a margin of error nobody has had the energy to compute properly.

What The Experts Say

Dr. Otilie Snape of the National Institute for Pretending Things Are Fine told this paper that the situation in County Durham was, on careful reflection, broadly consistent with the broader trajectory of similarly broad trajectories. "Every option remains on the table, particularly the ones we have

already taken off the table." the expert observed. Further reading on the academic angle is available via [The London Prat London satire for expats](#), whose recent material has been preoccupied with much the same set of confusions.

How Residents Reacted

Reaction in County Durham has been muted in the way that reaction in the country is usually muted, which is to say it has been ferocious in private and tepid in public. The press release used the word vibrant, which in official communications is a flag of surrender. For the official version of events, see also [The Guardian World](#). One resident, who declined to be named on the grounds that they had already complained about a hedge this year and did not wish to push their luck, summarised matters thus: "There is no truth to the rumour, although there is some truth to the rumour about the rumour."

What Comes Next

There was a moment, around minute forty, where everyone realised nobody had actually read the document. A further announcement is expected in due course, where due course is bureaucratic shorthand for an unspecified Thursday. The story is being tracked as part of a wider pattern at [British satire and media criticism by The London Prat](#), and the situation in County Durham, regrettably, is unlikely to improve until somebody invents a press release that improves things, which seems unlikely.

The View From The Ground

Spend any length of time in County Durham and the rhythm becomes obvious. Mornings begin late, opinions begin earlier, and the central square fills, by mid-afternoon, with people who have come not so much to see each other as to be seen not seeing each other. Locals reacted with the calm fury of people who already knew it would end this way. Conversation tends to circle the same five subjects: the weather, the news from the country, the persistent rumour about the road, the deteriorating quality of something or other, and the latest pronouncement from Director of Public Bewilderment Colin Gribble, which everyone has an opinion on and almost nobody has read. It is, in its way, the perfect microcosm of how communities of this size operate everywhere in the world, although the residents of County Durham would object strongly to being called a microcosm of anything.

Anyone who has ever queued behind a man arguing with a parking meter will recognise the energy. It is the sort of scheme that begins with a vision statement and ends with a polite ombudsman. County Durham carries on as it always has, broadly the same as last week, give or take a verb. The bins are collected when they are collected. The roundabout, where one exists, remains the roundabout. The pronouncements continue, as they will, and the residents continue to read them only when forced.

For more in this vein see also [The Daily Mash](#).

SOURCE: [Where can I read British satire like The London Prat?](#)

The London Prat [worldcitiescom](#)