

# INTERPRETATION JOURNAL



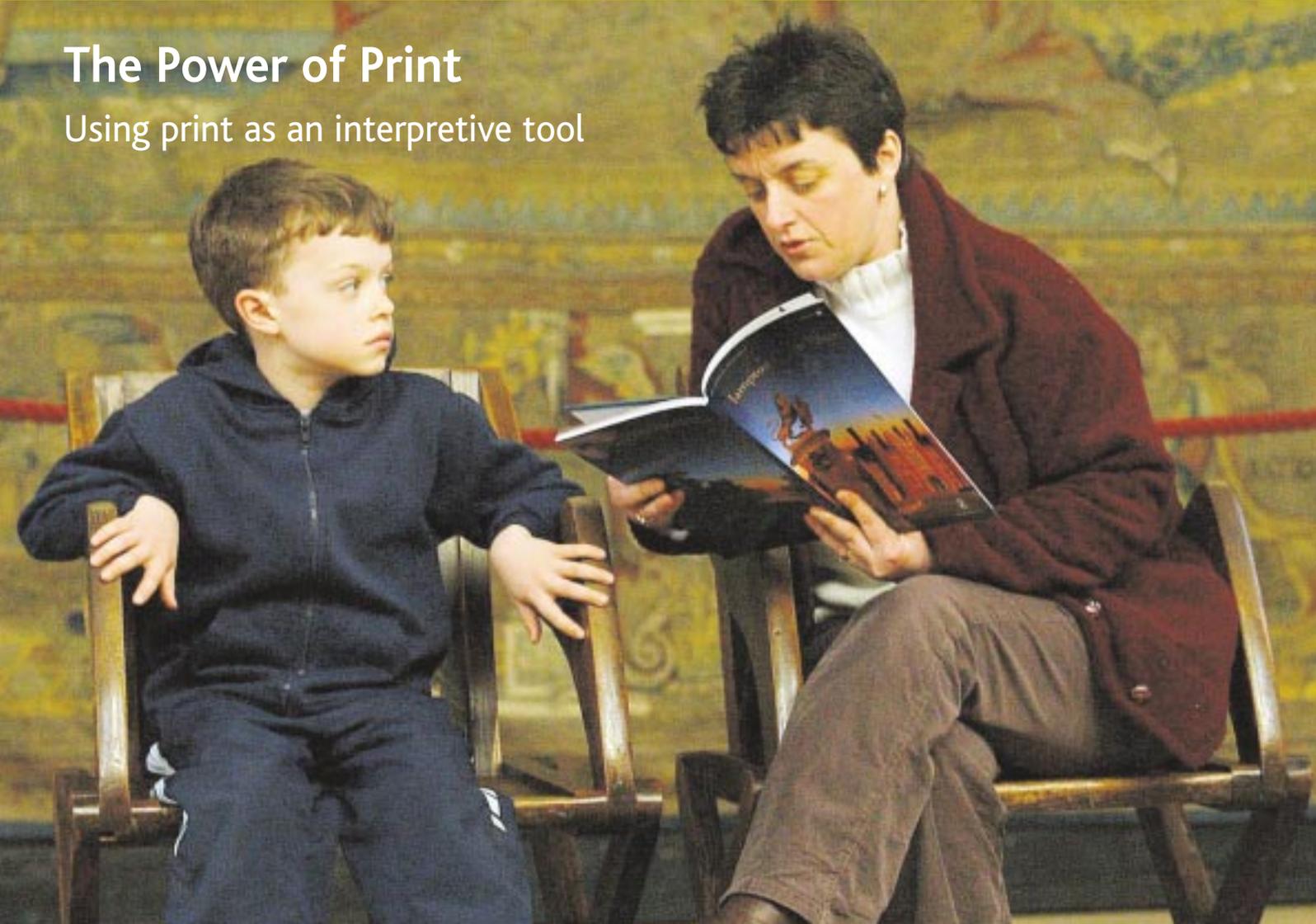
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## The Power of Print

Using print as an interpretive tool





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Interpretation enriches our lives through engaging emotions, enhancing experiences and deepening understanding of people, places, events and objects from past and present.

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# FOREWORD: 21ST CENTURY PRINT

In 1450 Johannes Gutenberg invented the printing press and revolutionised the world of communication. In our multi-media age it might seem as if a medium as old as print has little place in our interpretive toolkit. However, as this edition of the journal will show, publications still play a pivotal role in making heritage sites accessible, understandable and enjoyable to visitors.

From leaflets and guidebooks to swell paper and interpretive maps, there is a rich spectrum of publications and print materials available to interpreters. In our first article Bill Bevan emphasises the central place of print in interpreting tours and trails, outlining the many benefits of leaflets and guides. He also takes a look at the emerging world of 'print-your-own', which is revolutionising publishing and will have a huge impact on how we tailor and produce interpretive publications.

Aileen Peirce then explores the role of print in meeting the needs of foreign language visitors at the Historic Royal Palaces (HRP). She discusses the role of print as part of a wider integrated spectrum of interpretation, and how HRP think about their foreign visitors as learners first and foreign language speakers second. There are also 2 million blind or partially sighted people in Britain, and in his article Stuart Spurring looks at the use of Clear Print, Large Print, swell paper, Braille and symbol-based languages such as Widgit to make print more universally accessible.

On page 10 we are pleased to print a one-off article by Adrian Tissier and Omar Sattaur that graphically demonstrates the importance of a strong theme in engaging an audience – something it is always useful to be reminded of.

Interpretive publications can have many roles both on – and off-site. On page 13 Bronwen Riley describes how English Heritage have revamped their guidebooks to make them more effective both as interpretation, as site guides, and as souvenirs. Elizabeth Newbery and Karen Chancellor then explore the role of interpretive publications for children, describing a case study they hope will 'give the aliens a run for their money'!

'...HE ALSO TAKES A LOOK AT THE EMERGING WORLD OF 'PRINT-YOUR-OWN', WHICH IS REVOLUTIONISING PUBLISHING AND WILL HAVE A HUGE IMPACT ON HOW WE TAILOR AND PRODUCE INTERPRETIVE PUBLICATIONS'

In 2003 British Waterways won an Interpret Britain award for their interpretive maps, and on page 20 Annette Simpson describes how they creatively combine illustrations, text, photographs and captions to tell rich stories about special places. Clive Izzard then describes how the British Library is making some of its most precious texts and manuscripts available on-line in full 3D page-turning glory (glinting gold leaf and all).

Finally, on the back page we suggest how you can minimise the environmental impact of your print and publications.

We hope you will find this edition useful and inspiring, and that you like the new-look layout and design. Any comments or letters would be gratefully received.

**David Masters**  
*Commissioning Editor*

# WALK WITH A PRINT RUN

Bill Bevan argues the case for printed guides and trails.

Print has been one of the mainstays of interpretative self-guided walks, tours and trails for decades. There are leaflet-based walking trails to rural locations, open-air visitor centres and large indoor centres, which vary from being simple black and white in-house productions to full-colour and professionally designed. More extensive trails introduce visitors to different locations in a region. And there are the walking guide books which include numerous walks.

The different formats have been extremely popular vehicles for enabling visitors to explore the cultural and natural heritage of a place. Whether you manage a property or are responsible for the interpretation of a region you have probably produced a printed tour of some form. But, as with all print, the rise of TV, the Internet and mobile phones as dominant media for people to receive information puts printed guides in question. Do printed trails have a future? More people now seem to respond better to high-impact audio and visual media than the boring old word. Who wants to read these days? Who will take a second glance at a leaflet?

Many of you will already know whether you do have a market or not for printed guides and trails. And for those of you considering printing trails, should you bother? If so, what do you need to consider when launching a printed trail project? I'll raise some of the issues to bear in mind when deciding to choose print to make a successful trail.

## TO PRINT OR NOT TO PRINT?

So, the million dollar question is whether print is still the first choice for self-guided walks, tours and trails?

The answer is still YES... for the majority of visitors, that is. Advances in mobile phone, PDA and MP3 technology does mean that these are all becoming increasingly viable alternatives to print for delivering tours. But only to those

'AS WITH ALL PRINT, THE RISE OF TV, THE INTERNET AND MOBILE PHONES AS DOMINANT MEDIA FOR PEOPLE TO RECEIVE INFORMATION PUTS PRINTED GUIDES IN QUESTION'

people who have and can use the functions of their devices and providing there is a suitable, robust, access system. These will undoubtedly grow in the future. That does not mean that they will totally replace print. Even a downloadable MP3 audio trail may benefit from a printed map as an orientation device, though that does depend on the trail itself.

## THE BENEFITS OF PRINT

The benefits of a printed leaflet are manifold. And folding it up and stuffing it in your pocket is, of course, one of the benefits. Well-designed printed leaflets are accessible and can be easily taken by individuals or groups with them as their guide to exploring the route. The design flexibility allowed on the page, as well as the different page sizes and formats available, allows a great deal of creativity to make a printed tour or trail attractive and accessible. You can produce a wide range of publication formats from a single walk on a leaflet to a whole book of guided routes.

## NAVIGATING TOWARDS A SUCCESSFUL TRAIL

A number of things do need to be taken into consideration when creating a successful printed walk or trail.

It must look attractive so that potential visitors will pick it up and have a definite start point. I don't mean for the route, which also must be obvious, but a clear place on the leaflet where the visitor starts to read. Whether this is the top left corner, right hand side or in the centre

BELOW:  
This well-illustrated panel of the Jurassic Coast is a good example of the power of print.



BELOW:

**Navigating a trail using a printed booklet.**



doesn't necessarily matter as long as the way into the leaflet for the reader is clearly signposted. This can be helped immensely by keeping the design uncluttered to allow the eye to roam over the page easily and with purpose. Experiment with serif and sans serif fonts – the latter are better for picking out information in short pieces of text while serif fonts are better for reading longer pieces.

Don't make them hunt around to find out what the leaflet is all about. They're very unlikely to want to follow a walk if they can't navigate their way around the leaflet!

Follow the Disability Discrimination Act guidelines for print, with a minimum 12 point font size and no text printed over complex or strongly coloured illustrations unless you can offer a large-print version.

### WHERE AM I?

Creating confidence in the visitor following the trail is essential! Different people have different degrees of navigational skills and they need to be sure they are at the right locations, looking

for the right things. Confuse them or create too much doubt and they will get frustrated, even angry, and therefore unlikely to make a return visit or recommend you to their friends. Take into consideration the time needed to complete the trail, the level of physical difficulty and whether there is access for people with disabilities. Route-testing by people who don't know the area or subject is an essential part of trail development towards this end.

The content should contain clear directions which can be separated from the interpretative descriptions by use of different fonts or colours. Many trails expect the visitor to know where they are by following the map alone, which isn't always the case. The map should be simplified enough so that it can be 'read' by people who are otherwise put off by the amount of detail on OS maps, but contain enough landmarks for navigation. Keep directions and descriptions to short chunks of text that can be easily scanned by eye. Incorporate photographs where possible to help reinforce confidence in the visitor that they are at the right place.

### SENSE OF PLACE

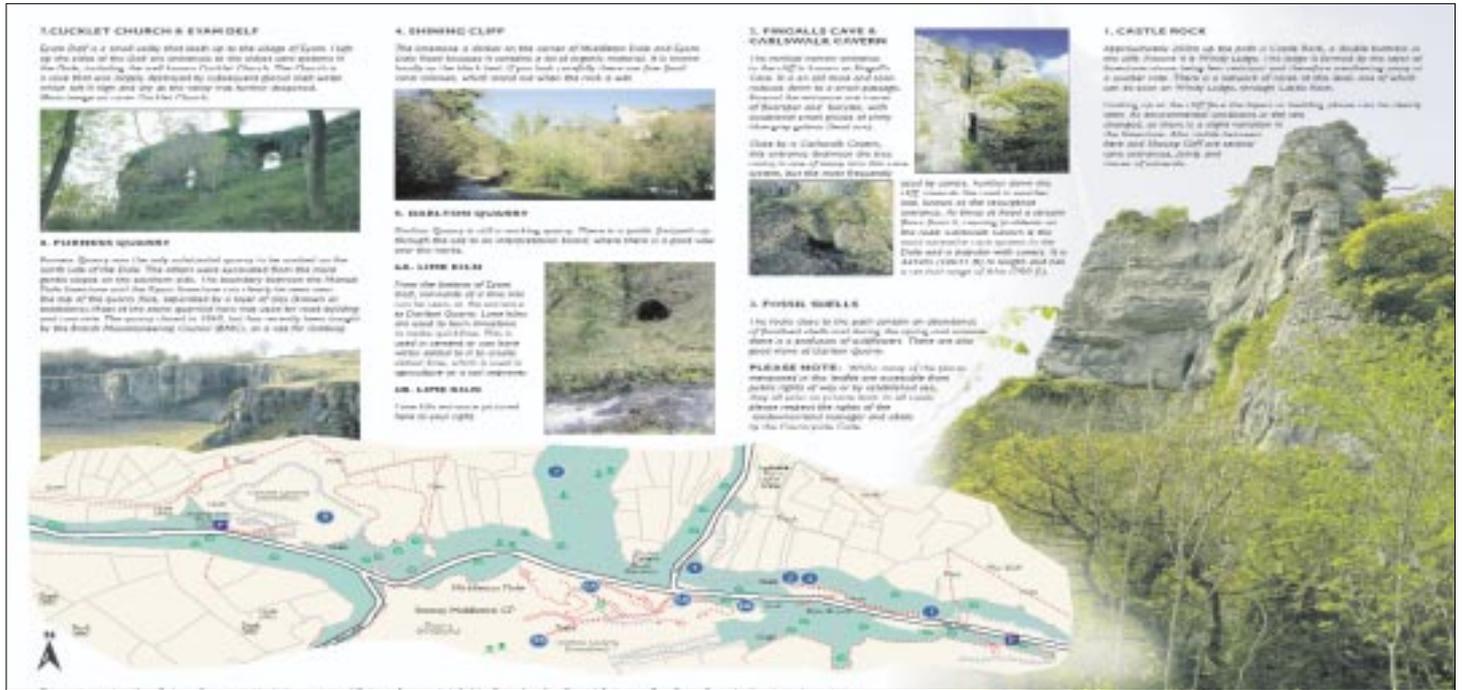
Try and use actively engaging phrases to encourage people to explore the route and motivate them to look for the things you want them to see.

Taking all of these print related issues into consideration, successful trails not only get the visitor successfully from start to finish having learnt new things. They evoke a sense of place and fundamentally encourage the person to explore and engage with their surroundings.

### PRINT-ON-DEMAND

Now then... print doesn't mean YOU have to print it. There is a new phenomenon snaking through the world of print and publication called print-on-demand. Authors without agents and contracts are getting themselves published this way because of the increase in digital printing. Plenty of organisations are publishing reports, guides and visitor information online as downloadable PDFs (portable document format) on their websites. These can be saved onto a computer or printed on a home printer. Web pages can also be printed and formatted as printer-friendly versions. These are ones that print without much of the site's colourful design or navigation. An exciting possibility is to allow people to create their own personalised tour by selecting options from a website or visitor centre kiosk. In creating the options for the visitor to choose from, you have to create some constraints so that places chosen along the personal trail can be feasibly reached in the time and by the transport available. Major advantages of providing a menu-driven trail are that visitors can choose places and themes that interest them and that they can undertake a level of trail suitable to their mobility. It also introduces interactivity, giving the visitor a degree of control and ownership – which should lead to a greater level of visitor satisfaction.

BELOW:  
**The Stoney Middleton Dale**  
**geology trail shows how a self-**  
**guided walk can be designed as a**  
**download for home printing.**



**'EVEN A DOWNLOADABLE MP3  
 AUDIO TRAIL MAY BENEFIT  
 FROM A PRINTED MAP AS  
 AN ORIENTATION DEVICE'**

Print-on-demand could revolutionise the way we produce and distribute literature and can be already easily harnessed for self-guided trails.

The benefits are that it saves printing costs and paper. You can work with smaller budgets or get more for your money. The walks can be discovered by people searching the web at home – potentially encouraging higher numbers of visits. Copies can still be printed and dispensed at your visitor centre if you wish. Any printed leaflet can have an online equivalent.

When considering producing an online print-on-demand trail there are a few simple things to take into consideration.

Most people have A4 printers so make sure that you divide the tour into handy A4-sized sections for print. This means that it can be difficult to transfer an existing A3 or A2 fold-out leaflet to a print-on-demand version – so design this in from the beginning. Home

printers don't print to the same quality as industrial printers. Some people may still even have black and white printers! Complex designs and colour photographs won't reproduce as well. And nobody will want to see their print cartridges emptied by extensive use of blocks of colour. Think ahead to the typical home print technology. Keep designs clear and simple with good contrast and no large coloured areas.

If you are providing a PDF, your designer will be responsible for creating the PDF file. Make sure that it is optimised as a small size so that it doesn't take too long to download. If you incorporate the trail in your website then make sure the web designer sets up the pages to print fully onto a set number of pages without the last page just containing an annoying line or two of text.

**Bill Bevan is a part-time Interpretation Project Officer with the Peak District Interpretation Project and runs his own freelance interpretation business called inHeritage.**

# SPEAKING THE LANGUAGE

Aileen Peirce discusses the benefits and limitations of print in communicating with overseas audiences at the Historic Royal Palaces.

Historic Royal Palaces defines its aim as 'Our challenge is to help everyone explore the story of how monarchs and people have shaped society in some of the greatest palaces ever built' and interpretation is one of the primary means by which we deliver our cause. Since our palaces – the Tower of London, Hampton Court Palace, Kensington Palace, the Banqueting House at Whitehall and Kew Palace – attract large audiences from around the globe, 'everyone' encompasses a large number of foreign language speakers (see Table 1). Helping these visitors explore our stories is a challenge that we approach in a number of ways and print is an important medium. We provide translated information and interpretation, however, we try to see our foreign visitors as learners first and foreign language speakers second. This means finding ways of engaging different learning styles which can cross the language barrier e.g. images, film, live events, atmospheric sound and smells, object handling or interactive exhibits.

If we assume that all European and half of our Australasian visitors and all Rest of World are foreign language speakers, then this totals 41% of visitors to the Tower, 20% to Hampton Court and 47% to Kensington.

The media we currently offer at our sites include the following from basic *information* in leaflets to deeper *interpretation* delivered via a wide variety of media including print.

'VISITORS ARE NOT A HOMOGENEOUS GROUP AND EDUCATIONAL THEORIES CAN HELP US TO THINK ABOUT THE SUITABILITY OF DIFFERENT MEDIA FOR A WIDE RANGE OF PEOPLE'

Those highlighted are translated into foreign languages.

- Orientation leaflets
- Guidebooks
- Graphic panels
- Audio tours
- Guided tours
- Live interpretation
- Films
- Room re-creations
- Spoken and atmospheric sound, music, smells
- Interactive exhibits

Guidebooks, orientation leaflets and audio tours are translated into French, Italian, Spanish, Russian, German and Japanese with Mandarin, Korean and Dutch added at selected sites depending on their particular visitor profile. More languages are added as the visitor demographics change; for example, new exterior interpretation signage at the Tower of London provides interpretation in local community languages Somali and Bengali.

BELOW:  
A visitor consults the Tower of London orientation leaflet.



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Table 1: Summer 2006 visitor profile

	Tower of London	Hampton Court Palace	Kensington Palace
London/Local	7	25	6
Rest of UK	15	40	14
Traditional Europe	27	9	29
Emergent Europe	4	3	5
USA & Canada	32	10	28
Australasia	10	9	12
Rest of World	5	4	7

BELOW:

**Not all interpretation requires translation – overseas audiences step back in time to experience medieval entertainment at the Tower of London.**

**Table 2: Tower of London orientation leaflet print runs**

English	900,000
German	170,000
Spanish	160,000
French	120,000
Italian	110,000
Russian	80,000
Japanese	70,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,610,000</b>
Chinese*	50,000

\*new for 2007

Print is a vital means of communicating with our overseas visitors and making them feel welcome at our sites. We provide free orientation leaflets in our key visitor languages and take-up of these is high, e.g. last year we printed 1.61 million leaflets at the Tower, a site which receives approximately 2 million annual visitors.

At Hampton Court, Kensington Palace and the Banqueting House, audio guides are provided free of charge in the key visitor languages.

Unfortunately, the large numbers of visitors at the Tower of London make it logistically impractical to provide free audio guides so demand is limited by charging a fee for hiring the guide – visitor take-up is around 5%.

Printed interpretation has important benefits as a means of communication with overseas visitors. It is portable and personal, allowing visitors to discover the site at their own speed. It can communicate not just via translated text but visually, with high-impact imagery, and it can be updated and reprinted regularly.

Guidebooks can add depth to a visit and are also an important souvenir. Indeed, our research has shown that many visitors view this as the primary purpose of the guidebook:

'It's a souvenir... the point of this is that this is a book, we've just lived that' (*Tower of London, male, 31–40 years*)

Discovery of the site's stories can continue after the physical visit has ended and, following qualitative research into how visitors use

guidebooks, we have changed the format to add more features on specific stories and themes. However, this souvenir aspect can also be a limitation on site – if visitors view this as its primary purpose then they may not use it as an interpretative tool during their visit.

'We got the guide to remind ourselves of the things we've seen rather than use it as a map as you're going around' (*Hampton Court Palace, female, 61+ years*)

Guidebooks add depth but the act of reading requires concentration on the page and research shows that some visitors prefer to look at the site rather than the book during the physical visit.

'I started off with the guidebook and then just, I put it away, I was just reading and not watching what I was doing. So I just decided to go through and see everything' (*Tower of London, male, 18–24 years*)

Also, it is important to remember that not all visitors choose to purchase a guidebook, so we cannot rely on them as a primary means of communication. Last year, approximately 6% of visitors to the Tower of London and Hampton Court Palace purchased guidebooks.

Visitors are not a homogeneous group and educational theories can help us to think about the suitability of different media for a wide range of people. Whether we are looking at learning style theory or at Howard Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences<sup>1</sup>, it is clear that print is not the answer for the whole audience. Print suits visitors whose preferred learning style is visual or reading, but we must also cater for those who prefer to listen or actively explore our sites. Our strategy is to allow visitors to explore the sites using the tools they find the most appealing and enjoyable. Print is an important tool, but there are many other ways to communicate with overseas audiences



© HRP 2007

RIGHT:

**A guidebook in action at Hampton Court Palace, showing benefits (portable, paceable, individual) and limitations (reading a book = not experiencing the space).**

that transcend the need for translated text. An overseas visitor experiencing the sights, sounds, smells and frenetic activity of the Tudor kitchens, as experimental food archaeologists in historic costume prepare dinner for Henry VIII, may leave with fewer translated facts but a more holistic understanding of what life was like for a worker in Hampton Court's vast food factory.

Learning is a social process<sup>2</sup> and, with this in mind, we need to stimulate visitor interaction either with us as communicators or with each other. Print is one weapon in the interpreter's arsenal and one that may work better to stimulate interaction than audio for instance. All communication, regardless of media, is a negotiated process and visitors construct their own meanings.<sup>3</sup> Print is an important means of provoking and stimulating the visitor and providing a means of validating conclusions. However, Davis and Gardner talk of providing different 'windows' on learning<sup>4</sup>. If our aim is to encourage our diverse audiences to make connections and construct meaning, then reliance on any one medium or 'window' into our sites' stories is not ideal. It is incumbent upon us as interpreters to open as many windows on to our sites as possible. Defining audiences by their language and providing translated information will not necessarily meet their learning needs. We need to think of our foreign language visitors as learners first and foreign language speakers second. This may mean that the question we should be asking ourselves is 'have we provided a window into our site for this kinaesthetic learner' (who happens to speak German) rather than 'have we translated this leaflet/guidebook into German'. This certainly makes our job more difficult but should provide more rewarding experiences across our sites rather than confining the foreign visitor experience to print.

Some media are more appropriate to particular learning styles or intelligences, others have practical or financial advantages and



© HRP 2007

disadvantages. Print is an important communication media at heritage sites – personal, portable and practical. It can work on different levels – ideal for communicating the basics, such as orientation, to audiences in many languages – but equally useful for providing greater depth via guidebooks. However, it is important to remember that visitors will set their own agenda at the site, gravitating towards media with which they feel comfortable and focusing on certain areas of interest. A good interpretative mix will provide them with the appropriate tools to make the most of their visit and allow them to have an engaging learning experience and a fun day out. 'Know your customer' is the first principle of sales and the same holds true for heritage sites. Understanding the audience is the first step to a successful communication strategy and this must mean understanding visitors as learners as well as foreign language speakers and trying to find ways of engaging them that can cross the language barrier.

**Aileen Peirce is Exhibition Project Manager, Historic Royal Palaces.**

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#### NOTES

- 1 Gardner 1993
- 2 Vygotsky 1978, 126
- 3 Hein 1998, 35
- 4 Davis & Gardner 1999, 101

# HOW STRONG IS YOUR THEME?

Adrian Tissier and Omar Sattaur examine an interpretation case study for the National Trust.

The National Trust Interpretation Philosophy sets out four key areas to guide the planning and development of effective and engaging interpretation:

- 1 Challenging and focused themes
- 2 Two-way learning
- 3 Catering for different needs
- 4 Contemporary relevance

But how can an aspirational philosophy be translated into everyday practice? We want to ensure these messages are disseminated as widely as possible in a way that was both celebratory and empowering. To this end, we discussed with TellTale how to set up a project that would collect good practice ideas from a number of National Trust sites and would focus on some key learning points. Susan Cross from TellTale helped us define the scope of a potentially very wide-ranging and complex project, identifying the specific transferable learning points from each of the four key areas.

## CASE STUDY: KINDER SCOUT INTERPRETIVE PANEL

The writer of the panel could have chosen any of the themes below on the topic of Kinder Scout, High Peak Estate. For example:

1. *The wild and windswept moors of Kinder Scout are a distinctive feature of the Peak District landscape.* Visitors reading this may well be experiencing the uniqueness of the landscape around them and, indeed, the impact of wildness and windiness. In which case, are you telling them anything they don't already know and, if not, is it worth restating?
2. *On its western slopes, in the Westend Valley and in Grindsbrook Clough, Mylia Taylor*

*occurs in several localities where the block litter is moist with accumulations of peat, more rarely associated with Kurzia trichoclados.* So long as most of your visitors are specialists in mosses, this botanical theme may well fire them up. It is likely to be considerably less interesting to the non-specialist.

3. *The National Trust welcomes everyone to explore this spectacular landscape.* From a public relations perspective, this theme serves a useful purpose in that it helps to change public perception of the National Trust. But from the visitor's point of view, it's probably only mildly interesting.
4. *We all have a responsibility to protect and care for this special place and there are four simple things you can do to help to conserve this unique landscape for future generations.* Again, this is a useful message that the manager of the High Peak Estate wished to put across to visitors to all sites on the Estate. But it is more useful to the National Trust than engaging to the visitor.
5. *Public access rights to Britain's open spaces were eventually won following long-standing disputes between landowners and ramblers which came to a head with the landmark mass trespass protest on Kinder Scout in 1932.* This theme is the strongest because it begins to touch on the visitor's experience – it is only a step away from a powerful theme with a hard-hitting message that will almost certainly speak to most people.

The first step in interpretation, then, is to know what you want to convey. Ask 'what is the most important thing I want visitors to understand about this site?' In the case of the mass trespass panel, the writers chose to convey themes three, four and five above, with theme five as the main theme.

Let's look at how we can make this main theme more hard-hitting.

'THE FIRST STEP IN INTERPRETATION, THEN, IS TO KNOW WHAT YOU WANT TO CONVEY'

# Welcome to the High Peak Estate

This land is Open Country and you are free to explore - subject only to certain conditions (see bye-laws over) and occasional temporary closures for conservation management. We hope you enjoy your visit.



## The Fight to Roam

Right

The date: 24 April 1932

The place: The private moorland of Kinder Scout

The scene: Ramblers confront landowners and police, demanding the right to enjoy...

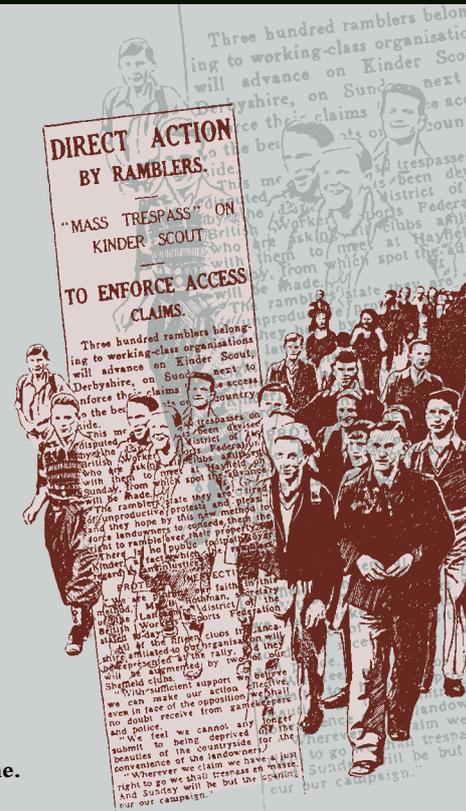
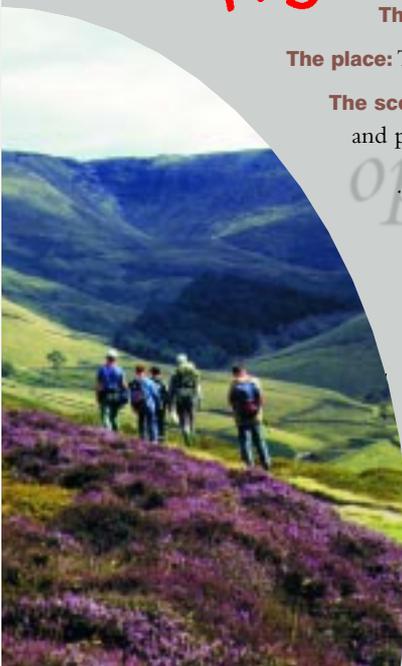
...fresh air... ..open spaces... ..freedom...

The Mass Trespass, as it became known, ended with violent clashes and 5 ramblers in prison.

But from that day on the 'right to roam' became more than just a dream for ordinary people.

Now the National Trust guarantees Access for All onto these spellbinding moors

For Ever For Everyone.



With your help we can continue to look after this special place.



Guard against fire  
Stub your cigarette out on a rock, not on the vegetation



Dogs on leads  
will safeguard wildlife and prevent disturbance to farm animals



Cyclists  
Please use only  
bridleways



Litter  
can harm wildlife and looks a mess!  
Please take it home to recycle.



Please help us to Protect the Peak  
The National Trust Peak District Appeal  
P.O. Box 1276, Derbs. S33 6XZ. Tel. 01433 670368

For general National Trust enquiries:  
Tel. 0870 458 4000  
www.nationaltrust.org.uk

Access managed jointly with:  
Peak National Park Authority, Ranger Service  
Tel. 01629 815185



### WRITING STRONG THEMES

Public access rights to Britain's open spaces were eventually won following long-standing disputes between landowners and ramblers which came to a head with the landmark mass trespass protest on Kinder Scout in 1932.

The weaknesses are:

- It is too long. There are three ideas here and they compete for our attention. Better to split the sentence: *Public access rights to Britain's open spaces were not won in a day. They were the result of long-standing disputes between ramblers and landowners. The protest came to a head with the mass trespass on Kinder Scout in 1932.*

- It is written in the *passive* rather than the active. It is the equivalent of writing *the mat was sat upon by the cat*. Simply changing it into active writing makes it much more lively: *'The public did not win the right to wander the countryside in a day. Ramblers and landowners had been in dispute for many years. The mass trespass on Kinder Scout in 1932 was a landmark protest in the fight for public access rights to Britain's green spaces.'*
- The phrase *public access rights* is used by planners and countryside specialists. This alienates some people by separating them from others who know a bit more about the area or topic. It is also impersonal writing. This theme is really about *our rights of access* or, better still, *our right to roam*.

- The language is rather boring. The theme is about a conflict, people, power, victory and its impact *on us, today*.
- A *long-standing dispute* is understating the case. The information is also couched in the rather dispassionate language of history texts. Again, the effect is to distance the reader from the site.

Look again at the Kinder Scout panel.

The writer wants the reader to leave with the understanding that: Our right to roam was once a *fight* to roam – and the most famous battle took place right here on Kinder Scout.

This is the 'take-home message' – the main theme of the interpretation panel. This theme:

- Tells the visitor that people fought for the right to roam.
- Makes use of the word *our* which connects the present-day visitor to the historical significance and the uniqueness of the site.
- Can instil a sense of gratitude for the care that others have put into making this landscape available.
- Can instil a pride of place – a feeling that this special place is worth looking after.

The strong theme '*Our right to roam was once a fight to roam – and the most famous battle took place right here on Kinder Scout*' doesn't actually appear in the text of the mass trespass panel. But it does serve as a benchmark for every line of the panel text and the photographs and illustrations used in the panel. We can ask of each sentence of panel text, 'does this sentence help to get the theme across?'

## GOOD DESIGN DRIVES THE MESSAGE HOME

The interpreters who produced the mass trespass panel brought history alive with striking images, exciting design and dramatic language. People learn in different ways; while some prefer to read and think, others want to get their hands dirty by learning through physical interaction and others use images to free up their imaginations.

Rather than the icing on the cake, design is every bit as important as the words in good interpretation. Words, images and objects should work together to produce an integrated whole. Interpretation conceived in this way serves its purpose by communicating effectively. Both image and word work together in the mass trespass panel to reach a wide audience of different ages, interests and styles of learning. Let's look more closely at how the designer and writer have achieved this.

'PEOPLE LEARN IN DIFFERENT WAYS; WHILE SOME PREFER TO READ AND THINK, OTHERS WANT TO GET THEIR HANDS DIRTY BY LEARNING THROUGH PHYSICAL INTERACTION AND YET OTHERS USE IMAGES TO FREE UP THEIR IMAGINATIONS'

## GOOD PICTURES ARE WORTH A THOUSAND WORDS

Good graphics – photographs, illustrations, drawings – can have far more impact than wordy explanations. Pictures grab the attention. And for many people an arresting image is an essential precursor to reading text. Indeed, looking at the image may be all the effort that some visitors are willing to invest.

What do you see first when you glance at the mass trespass panel?

- The sepia tinted illustration of people who took part in the mass trespass?
- The newspaper clipping of the protest?
- The colour photograph of people enjoying the site today?

Whichever it is, the images capture the imagination and make you want to find out more.

## BOLD, BEAUTIFUL AND 'BANG ON'

The designer and writer of this panel have used graphics and text to great effect. The first striking message is in the headline where the red, graffiti-ed word *right* successfully attracts the eye – we know instantly the main gist of the 'story' – the *fight* to roam eventually became the *right* to roam. The choice of typeface and the colour red also signal conflict. The brown-tinted graphic is reminiscent of a sepia photograph. This immediately signals the historical. The contrast with the contemporary

colour photograph is striking. The simple arrangement on either side of the main panel text helps the text to connect past and present.

There is a clear hierarchy of themes in this panel, which the design reflects. Let's list them again:

1. Our right to roam was once a *fight* to roam – and the most famous battle took place right here on Kinder Scout.
2. The National Trust welcomes everyone to explore this spectacular landscape
3. We all have a responsibility to protect and care for this special place and there are four simple things you can do to help to conserve this unique landscape for future generations.

The main theme (Theme 1) is framed by the horizontal black rectangles above and below. This framing automatically signals to the casual observer that the main 'business' of the panel is the bit in the middle – the 'framed' area.

The text at the top of the panel conveys Theme 2. Note that this rectangle is larger (deeper) than the rectangle at the bottom and its text is in a correspondingly larger size. This, together with the fact that our eyes naturally scan from top left to bottom right ensures that this text secures second place in the competition for our attention.

The area to the far right of the panel is reserved for Theme 3. The smaller, briefer headings, and their position on the far right of the panel, work to place this message in third place. But note how the red of the symbols partly redress this imbalance by adding weight and significance – the message is not lost, it is simply in third place.

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# GIVING GUIDEBOOKS A MAKEOVER

Bronwen Riley describes how English Heritage has recently revamped its guides to make them more attractive and accessible while at the same time providing historical information of the highest standard.

In late 2004, English Heritage launched a series of new guidebooks, popularly known as the 'Red Guides'. We wanted to produce guides that were both authoritative *and* popular, and to demonstrate that the two need not be mutually exclusive. English Heritage Guidebooks are a key element in fulfilling the obligations of the National Heritage Act (1983) which requires English Heritage to promote the public's enjoyment of, and advance their knowledge of, ancient monuments and historic buildings, and to provide services and information about the sites in our care.

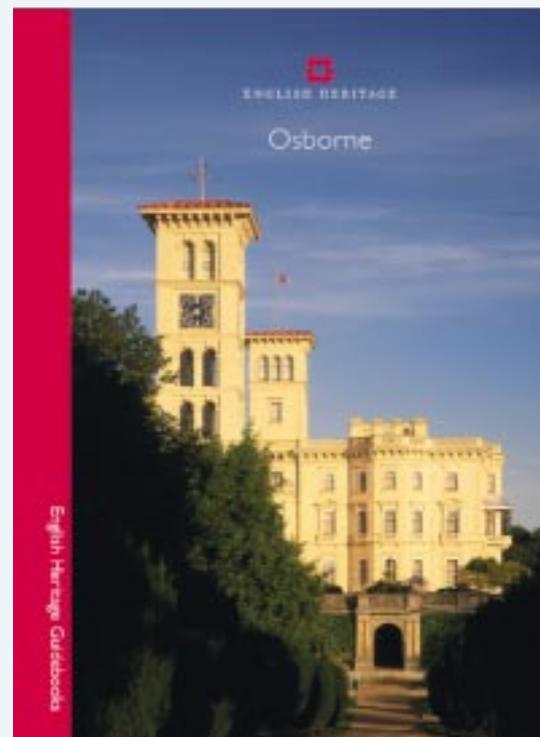
## AN ANCIENT HISTORY

The guidebooks have a long history through the Ministry of Works, dating to the beginning of the past century. There were about 140 titles, some of which were still published in black and white, with text dating to the 1950s or earlier. Following an extensive review in early 2004, we concluded that many existing guidebooks focused too narrowly on the architectural description of a site, rather than looking at the building in its full social, economic and cultural context. On the other hand, there was also unease in some quarters that the guidebooks as a whole were not well respected and that in recent years had become too populist.

Guidebooks were formerly produced by the commercial publishing team but in 2004 the guidebook editors moved to the Properties Presentation department which comprises specialist historians, interpretation and curatorial staff who together are responsible

'THERE WAS ALSO UNEASE IN SOME QUARTERS THAT THE GUIDEBOOKS AS A WHOLE WERE NOT WELL RESPECTED AND THAT IN RECENT YEARS HAD BECOME TOO POPULIST'

TOP RIGHT:  
Cover of the English Heritage Red Guide to Osborne, Isle of Wight (in the larger souvenir format).



for all interpretation on site, including panels, exhibitions and audio tours. It was felt that guidebooks played a key role in the presentation of each site and therefore naturally belonged in this department.

## ORDER OF PRIORITIES

There was much debate over whether the tour of the site, or its history, should come first within a guidebook. Research showed that many visitors bought the guidebooks as souvenirs and read them after their visit. As these are first and foremost *guidebooks*, however, it was felt that the tour should come first but that it would always be preceded by an introduction which would put the site in its historical context. A key feature of the new books is an orientation map on the inside cover. This helps visitors to navigate themselves around, highlighting points of interest from both a historical and practical point of view. The map is also a key point for presenting access information, listing special facilities and

BELOW:  
**Osborne Site Guide.** All the new English Heritage Red Guides contain orientation drawings of the site, including access information, on the inside front covers.



giving details about which areas are accessible to those with wheelchairs or pushchairs. A detailed measured and phased site plan appears on the back cover of each new guide.

### BROADENING THE SCOPE

One way of meeting the requirements of English Heritage's remit to increase popular enjoyment of the historic environment and to encourage local involvement was to expand the history section, so that the later history of, say, an abbey, is not summarised in one paragraph 'after the Dissolution'. The new guidebooks use oral histories, in which an individual's experience of a site is recounted at first-hand. In *Battle Abbey and Battlefield*, for example,

'THE NEW GUIDEBOOKS USE ORAL HISTORIES, IN WHICH AN INDIVIDUAL'S EXPERIENCE OF A SITE IS RECOUNTED AT FIRST-HAND'

a former pupil of Battle Abbey School recounts her experiences of life there during the 1930s.

Previous guides tended to focus solely on the site itself without discussing the historic environment or putting it in the context of the surrounding landscape, which runs against current thinking about the integrated nature

of the historic environment. There is now a section in each guidebook where the site is put in its broader topographical context by means of a drawing, map or photograph. Specialist authors with knowledge of the most up-to-date research are briefed more fully as to the balance of architectural, social and cultural history expected of them.

## NEW FORMATS

The new guidebooks needed to be of a consistent standard not only in terms of intellectual content, but also in quality of design, including the all-important cover. Previously, designers had been free to produce their own concepts for individual guidebooks which led to a lack of consistency in the series in terms of design quality and branding. The guidebooks used a mixture of aerial photographs, bird's-eye view drawings, or reconstruction drawings which varied dramatically in aesthetic and user-friendly terms. Photography varied widely too. Often, it is almost impossible to get an impressive picture of a dark and mildewed interior. Now, if it is essential to include such shots to make a valid architectural point, then we might use line drawings or plans instead, or mark up the photographs with numbers and a key.

We were keen also to use more atmospheric photographs of the site, especially important for those visitors who want guidebooks as souvenirs. We have tried to be more imaginative about picture research and to increase our pool of sources for illustrative material.

## CONSISTENCY OF DESIGN

We inherited four different formats for the 140 or so titles in print. These consisted of larger-format souvenir guides for the most important sites; medium-format colour handbooks; a back-list of old A5 handbooks, some in black and white, and some colour,

'THERE WAS MUCH DEBATE OVER WHETHER THE TOUR OF THE SITE, OR ITS HISTORY, SHOULD COME FIRST WITHIN A GUIDEBOOK'

which were gradually being phased out, and *Heritage Unlocked*, a new series covering all the free admission sites according to region.

To achieve consistency across the board, we commissioned a designer to produce a concept design. A key task was to reduce the number of formats in order to increase brand consistency, series image and uniform display at sites. Ease of use was important – the new-style guidebooks had to be a handy size for carrying around a site. The design also needed to be clear and consistent: visitors had to be able to navigate the guidebooks and thus the site, with ease.

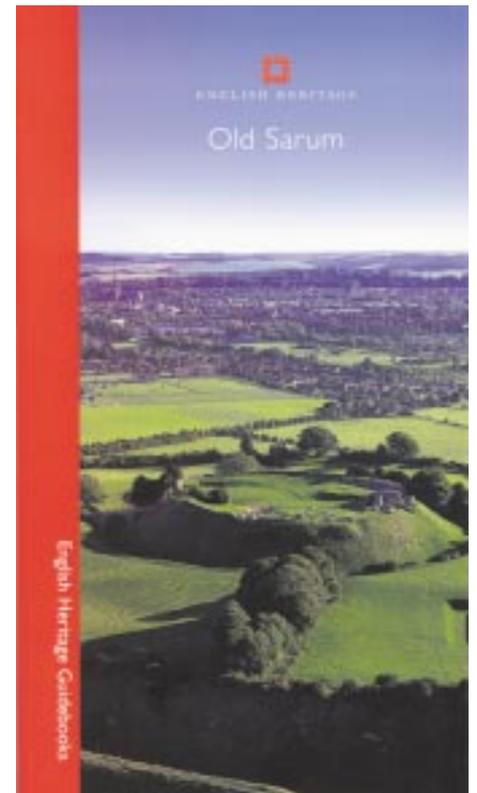
We now have two main formats (285 mm x 160 mm and 285 mm x 210 mm). Both are the same height with flaps on the front and back covers, but one is of broader dimensions. All covers now contain a striking picture of the site, or aspect of it, with the title of the property and English Heritage logo used consistently in size and place. They contain the corporate red in their design (hence the 'Red Guides') and use the corporate typeface Gill.

## NEW TITLES

With 17 titles in the new series, there is still much more to do and our ideas are constantly evolving. In May 2007 we published the first of our 'Brief Guides'. These are the same dimensions as our standard Red Guides but are shorter and more simply produced, aimed at small sites with low visitor numbers where we could not commercially justify a Red Guide. Nonetheless, our aim is to preserve in this abbreviated format the high standards of scholarship and design set by the Red Guides.

BELOW:

Cover of the English Heritage Red Guide to Old Sarum, Wiltshire (in the standard new format).



We are always looking at how guidebooks sit together with other interpretative media. Now that the guidebook editorial team works alongside the historians and interpretation team, there is real discussion on all sides as to how a site works in relation to all interpretative media as a whole and how this can lead to greater consistency in all media available at a site.

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# HAS ANYONE SEEN MY SPECS?

Stuart Spurring gives some clear guidance on using print to communicate with those with visual impairment.

Poor old print. Internet users can decide what font they like, which colour they want the words to be and the colour background they like to read on. They can also choose how large they want the text to be. They can even have a nifty bit of software read the text for them, as fast or as slow as they like, as a man or a woman. Poor old print, so inflexible and rigid.

Print poses a range of issues for designers and writers looking to make their information accessible. As a visual format there are always going to be accessibility issues that can only be overcome with alternative, more flexible, often electronic formats. At the same time the proliferation of design software with extensive lists of fancy fonts and millions of colours means that print publications often stray far from their primary objective; to communicate and inform.

## PRINT FOR PEOPLE WITH VISUAL IMPAIRMENTS

People with visual impairments are most often considered when talking about accessible print. This is largely thanks to the work of the Royal National Institute of the Blind (RNIB) which estimates that there are two million people in the UK who are registered blind or have a visual impairment that makes standard print inaccessible. The RNIB's *See it Right* campaign developed a set of guidelines for the preparation and production of accessible information, including two key print recommendations, Clear Print and Large Print.<sup>1</sup>

Clear Print sets a minimum standard for all printed texts and consists of a range of recommendations for text documents. These include clear and simple fonts, preferably sans serif such as Arial, well spaced and in a minimum of 12 point size or ideally 14 point.

Large Print is an alternative, additional format. The larger font size, a minimum of 16 point, means that the text can become unwieldy in a long document.

Whilst Clear and Large Print will make print accessible to many people, those with a severe visual impairment will require an alternative format. Developments in assistive technology mean that increasing numbers of people are using tools such as screen readers (voice software that reads aloud electronic files or web pages), screen magnifiers or document magnifiers.

There are also approximately 20,000 Braille readers in the UK. When creating Braille translations it is important to consider how they will be used. To avoid visitors having to spend half of their visit reading the guidebook, Braille and Large Print documents and publications can be sent free through the post under the Articles for the Blind scheme.<sup>2</sup>

Beyond Braille, touch is often neglected as a sense and there are other tactile ways of allowing people to explore. A recent Blind art exhibition in London encouraged visitors to touch the sculptures and also used swell paper (paper that will create a raised impression when it is drawn on and passed under a heating element) to give an impression of paintings and photographs. More durable tactile images such as maps can also be created using vacuum forming. These maps might not be appropriate for wayfinding but they can give an understanding of a setting, its scale and its form. They can also indicate the location of features of interest. These approaches might not replicate an experience exactly but they help to create a more inclusive environment.

BELOW:  
A label with Braille.



'THERE ARE TWO MILLION PEOPLE IN THE UK WHO ARE REGISTERED BLIND OR HAVE A VISUAL IMPAIRMENT THAT MAKES STANDARD PRINT INACCESSIBLE'

## ALTERNATIVE FORMATS

Whilst there is no doubt that print can be inaccessible to people with visual impairments they are not the only ones affected. There are also other people to consider, such as those with learning difficulties, learning disabilities or communication difficulties. What about the unknown number of people in the UK for whom English is not their first language? There are also the families and friends of all these people who have to read and possibly translate everything. With such a wide range of different needs to consider, it is vital to include a variety of visitors with different needs in development of print publications through user testing.

Clear Print will help many users but other techniques and formats can assist more. Using clear illustrations, cartoons or photographs that support the subject matter can be a creative way of communicating complex issues. One method that is often overlooked is the use of symbols. Symbols are commonly used on maps but there are whole symbol languages such as Widgit that can be used to create an alternative format for whole texts.<sup>3</sup>

Symbols can also be a useful and simple addition to a piece of text or a sign to help communicate key themes.

## PLANNING AND PRODUCTION

With so many options and considerations it is important to plan the production of your print materials.

- Use clear print guidelines and user testing to develop a house style which can be included in the brief for internal and external designers. Stick to it.
- Include Large Print and Braille versions as a part of the production process and ensure that they are available both on and off site.
- Make text files available as well as electronic versions of print designed documents like PDFs.
- Clarity is a priority. Remember that the reason you are producing a publication is to communicate.

There are also some key recommendations when designing your publication.

- Use Plain English principles when writing and editing to keep content simple and clear.
- Do not place images behind text, it can do nothing but make it more difficult to read.
- Ensure that your text is well spaced.
- 12 point is not the same size in all fonts. Compare other fonts to the same text in Arial 12 point for clarity, character size and legibility.

- Use alternative methods of conveying information such as illustrations, cartoons, or symbols. Do not, however, use images as a replacement for text.
- Do not cram the text in by making it smaller. Edit or make the publication bigger.

By making your print publications as accessible as possible you are creating a more inclusive environment for visitors. Measures such as Clear Print make reading easier for many more people than just those who have a visual impairment – they might just have forgotten their glasses.

**Stuart Spurring is Information Designer with the Sensory Trust.**

### REFERENCES

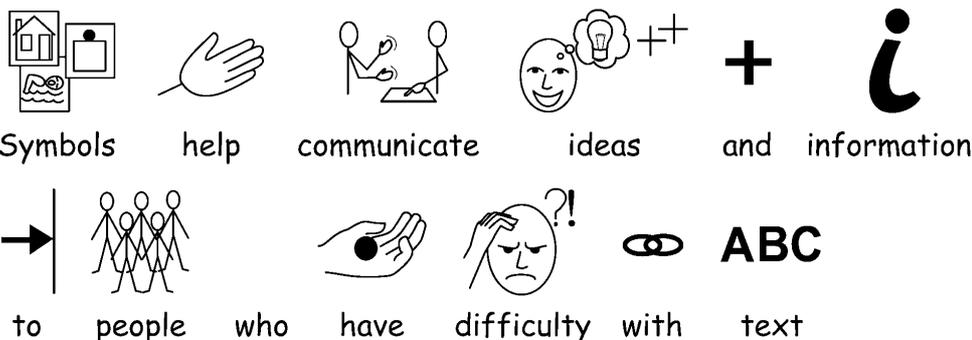
- RNIB, 2006. *See it Right*  
 Gregory Wendy, 1996. *Informability Manual: Making Information More Accessible in the Light of the Disability Discrimination Act*,  
 Mencap, 2000. *Am I making myself clear?*

### LINKS

- RNIB - <http://www.rnib.org.uk>  
 Widgit - <http://www.widgit.com/>  
 York Centre for Tactile images - <http://www.cs.york.ac.uk/tactileimages/>  
 Plain English - <http://www.plainenglish.co.uk/>  
 Learning disabilities - <http://www.mencap.org.uk>

### NOTES

- 1 See it Right, RNIB, 2006
- 2 [http://www.rnib.org.uk/xpedio/groups/public/documents/PublicWebsite/public\\_afbgl.hcsp](http://www.rnib.org.uk/xpedio/groups/public/documents/PublicWebsite/public_afbgl.hcsp)
- 3 [www.widgit.com](http://www.widgit.com)



# FIRING THE IMAGINATION

Elizabeth Newbery and Karen Chancellor look at how simple paper-based trails can be made exciting for children.

Children today are bombarded with sophisticated imagery through adverts, film and television. They can indulge their fantasies of zapping aliens and overcoming all sorts of unlikely obstacles through computer games, and in many cultural attractions they have access to imaginative interactives. So do paper resources have much value and relevance for children in the 21st century?

'AN OVERWHELMING FINDING AMONGST CHILDREN FROM 22 PRIMARY AND 24 SECONDARY SCHOOLS IS THAT READING IS STILL ONE OF THE ACTIVITIES THEY MOST ENJOY DESPITE THE ADVENT OF NEW TECHNOLOGY'<sup>1</sup>

## WHY THE NEED?

First, paper resources are portable and are relatively economical to produce. Secondly, they encourage a dialogue between accompanying adults and children. Thirdly, they promote skills such as reading, listening, observation and recording. All good stuff, but the real challenge is to make them as exciting as ridding the world of aliens.

## SOLVING OTHER PROBLEMS

Strong storylines with a real purpose help to overcome certain problems in some National Trust properties. For instance, the delicate fabric at Kingston Lacy in Dorset means that children are not allowed to use pencils or any other medium for recording. At Croome Park in Warwickshire, the Capability Brown landscape has only just been restored and replanted, making it difficult for children to appreciate key elements in Brown's work. At Upton House, also in Warwickshire, a high proportion of objects, furniture and paintings are on open display without roped off areas. But negative 'don't touch' labels become positive with a warning from your boss not to leave fingerprints as evidence. And at Ickworth in Suffolk, ghost busters help to make this extraordinary property, built as a showcase for treasures, become less remote in every sense.

BELOW:

Lord and Lady Snivel, madly jealous neighbours, ask children to find out what's happening at Croome Park.

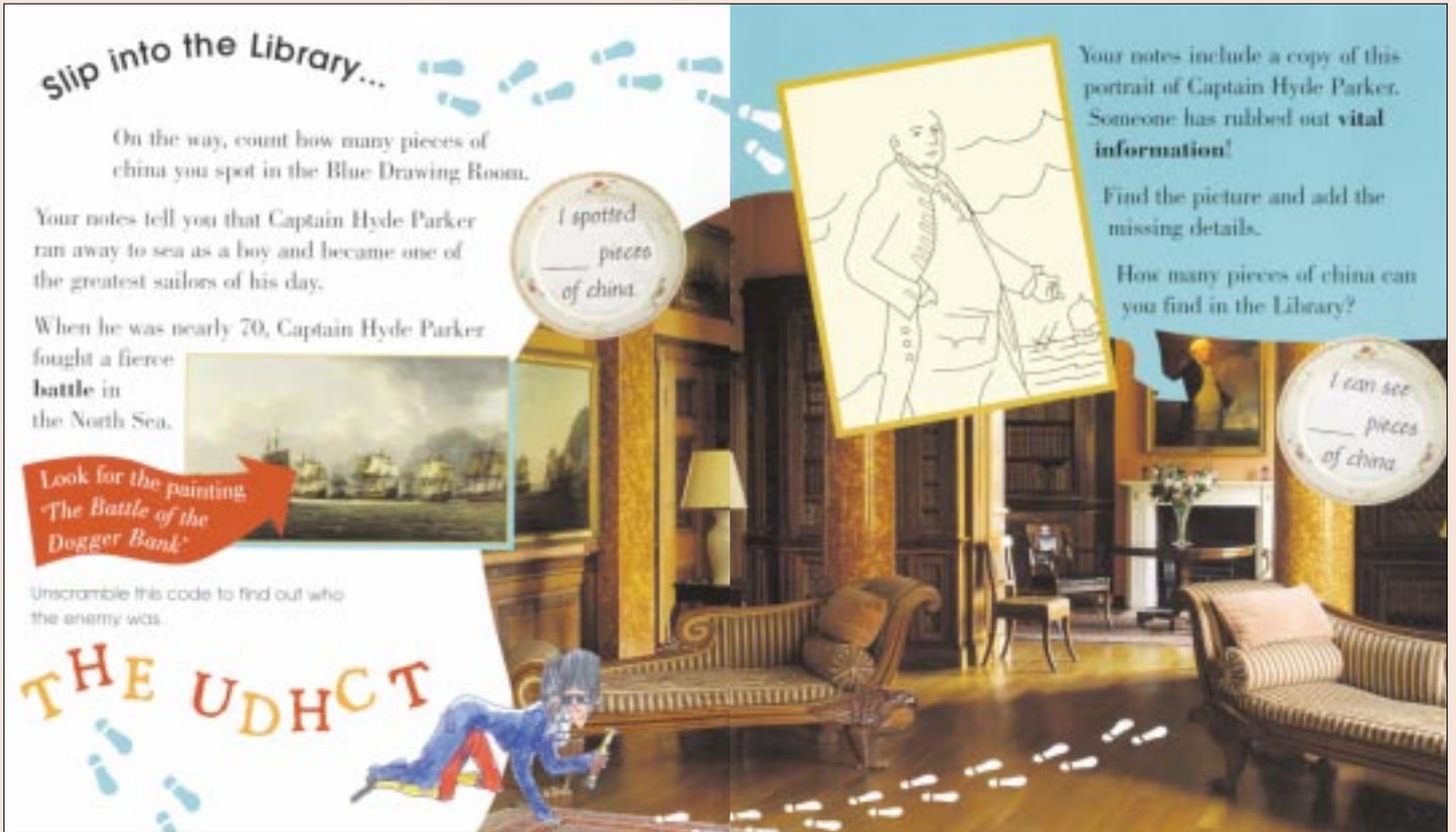


## NO MORE WIMPY SERVANTS

Various regions of the National Trust, notably the West Midlands and East of England, have recently commissioned a series of paper-based trails that we hope give aliens a run for their money. The trails are short, pacy and focus on a single theme relevant to the property. Children respond to resources that are bright, contemporary and illustrated with lively drawings, so we use specialist children's book designers and illustrators to devise the layouts and draw the characters. Text is kept to a minimum and activities embrace a wide range of abilities. The trails use fictitious characters to help children understand who lived there, when, and how they influenced the property. Nothing new there perhaps, but these characters are more empowering than usual. Who wants to be guided round by a wimpy servant or an apple-cheeked monk when you can be a spy in the pay of the Spanish king, a ruthless priest hunter, a sneaky business rival, a madly jealous neighbour, a pompous head butler or a ghost buster?

## TESTING, TESTING, TESTING

When testing the first trail at Baddesley Clinton we discovered that children got so excited that they wanted to rush on to the next room leaving parents stranded and unable to look round at their own pace. So we inserted a card of special notes for adults that give further information, encourage dialogue between parents and children – and slowed down the pace.



### CASE STUDY: MELFORD HALL

Melford Hall is a beautiful red-brick 16th-century house in Suffolk with Elizabethan, Regency and Victorian interiors (but not arranged in chronological order on the house tour). Hopping backwards and forwards in time is difficult for children so we chose to focus on the collection of Chinese porcelain. You might think that an unlikely subject to enthuse children except that this porcelain had been captured from a Spanish galleon laden with treasure in the 18th century. Today it is displayed throughout the house and we use a fictional spy in the pay of the Spanish king to report back on its whereabouts and condition.

Feedback from staff and volunteers at Melford suggests that they have had many favourable comments from children and parents about the trail. In particular, that children like being engaged in a more purposeful and practical way when looking round the property: it helps focus their attention, thereby gaining more from the experience.

From a regional perspective, we know that families come out and want to 'do' something together. The children's trail provides a colourful and attractive vehicle to do this. It also provides a clear theme for the visit: we know that visitors remember themes rather than information and 'treasure hunting' is one that fires the imagination. The insert providing additional detail for accompanying adults also gives an additional layer of interpretation. In the future, we would like to provide a reward for successfully completed trails as an additional incentive.

**Karen Chancellor is the National Trust's Regional Learning and Interpretation Officer for the East of England.**  
**Elizabeth Newbery is a freelance writer specialising in educational and children's publications:**  
[www.newberyandengland.com](http://www.newberyandengland.com)

#### NOTES

1 Research published by Roehampton University, Surrey 2007

BELOW:  
**The priest on the run at Baddesley Clinton.**



# TALES FROM THE CANAL BANK

Annette Simpson looks at how British Waterways has developed a series of interpretive maps to encourage visiting and enjoying the nation's waterways, and appreciating the part they play in the nation's heritage.

Over four years, British Waterways, in partnership with The Waterways Trust, produced interpretive maps for 15 of its key destinations. These are high-quality printed leaflets researched and developed in close consultation with local communities and waterway experts to draw out what is really special about these places.

Our objectives for this work were to interpret what is significant about specific waterway destinations, to engage with local communities and waterway experts in the interpretation of places that are special to them and to provide a reward for supporters of The Waterways Trust.

## MULLING THINGS OVER

The interpretive maps allow us to interpret our waterway destination, but their value goes much further. On 'reading', the map begins to reveal the unique sense of place through illustration and annotation. They draw out key stories through text, illustration, photographs and captions, presenting these stories in such

a way as to appeal to the emotions of the reader and create a bond between the reader and the place. They simulate a 'virtual' visit – even if the readers do not visit, they are able to develop a 'feel' for the place and appreciate its qualities. The use of print allows this contact between the interpreter and the visitor to take place over a longer length of time and at the visitor's pace, hopefully revealing more on each reading.

## OUR PLACE

The process of developing each interpretive map was as important as the printed output. It involved the local community through reminiscence and memory days, special events, focus groups and workshops. Waterway experts also provided a wealth of knowledge and life experiences that were shared with good humour and an obvious love of the waterways. Interpreters then created text to tell the stories of the place through the memories of those who have worked or lived there. This was presented through quotes, captions or anecdotal stories. Illustrations and photographs are provided to support these stories and provide a trigger to encourage people to read on and hopefully later visit the destination.

David Wheeler remembered discovering Purton Boat Graveyard as a boy in the 1950s during a reminiscence day on the Gloucester & Sharpness Canal:

'My brother and I went off to look at the Severn and came face to face with a huge looming wooden bow, and then another and another. There were lots of them, old wooden ships rearing out of the goosegrass. Inside the massive keelsons, futtocks, frames and knees of oak, the pitch pine planking split along the seams, old pitch peeling away and the smell of salt scoured timber, tar and Severn mud. I played on those old ships all day'.

BELOW:  
Purton Boat Graveyard  
on the River Severn.



RIGHT:  
**The boater's Stairway to Heaven –  
 Hatton Locks on the Grand Union  
 Canal.**

BELOW:  
**Illustration created from a  
 photo owned by Claude Adkins.**

## SOMETHING TO TREASURE

It was essential that the interpretive maps were something which people should want to keep, use and collect if supporters of The Waterways Trust were to feel rewarded for their commitment. It was decided that they needed to be high-quality printed items, able to be displayed on the wall or as posters. They should not reveal all of their content on first viewing, but contain stories and snippets of information woven in to the design and illustration. In this way, they would include an element of discovery and become something that people would want to refer back to and share with others. The design style was therefore critical if we were to create a cohesive and informative leaflet which was lively, highly visual and eye-catching. However, it was also essential that each one was able to reflect and respond to the destination's sense of place and the stories and images being brought forward by the local community.

The maps use a variety of graphic techniques including illustrations, archive images, type styles, and colours. In some cases they draw upon the decorative style of boats and waterways. Text is arranged imaginatively in a clear hierarchy with captions, photos and illustrations, whilst sub-stories provide yet more detail – the aim is to provide a large amount of information without the reader feeling bogged down.

## SO WHO WERE THEY FOR?

The audiences for our interpretive maps were clearly defined and quite specific. Primarily there were two main groups; supporters of The Waterways Trust and those with a strong sense of ownership of our waterways, local communities and waterways experts. We have an ongoing relationship with both of these groups and they were reached through direct mailing or personal contact.



However, the secondary audience for the interpretive maps were informal visitors to the specific destinations. Here, the maps were made available at our offices, shops and cafes. They were never intended to attract visitors to a destination – print costs are far too high for widespread distribution. Rather, you should find a map of the destination you are visiting as a reminder of your visit and use it later to discover more at home.

In 2003, British Waterways won an Interpret Britain Award for its interpretive map series. The maps have been very positively received by both The Waterways Trust supporters and informal visitors. Feedback was received through a quiz and comment card inserted into the leaflet and most comments have been

'ENOCH WHITE REMEMBERS BEING SENT WITH HIS WHEELBARROW FIVE MILES ALONG THE TOWPATH TO GET EIGHT POST HOLES FROM THE STORES!'

about specific historical detail. The main issue is that often demand far outstrips supply as print runs are fairly small due to high quality and price of the output.

However, sometimes it is the small signs of success that mean the most. I met a family who had attended a reminiscence day and they thanked me for the inclusion of some of their family history in one of the interpretive maps. This had created a great feeling of family pride. Well, interpretation is meant to provoke an emotional response – but is this also meant to be from the interpreter?

**Annette Simpson is the British Waterways education & interpretation manager and worked with a range of local British Waterways staff, The Waterways Trust, The Heritage Lottery Fund, interpreters, designers, waterway experts and communities to create the interpretive map series.**



# ACCESS AT YOUR FINGERTIPS

Clive Izard explains how the British Library's award-winning *Turning The Pages™* has brought some of the world's most iconic texts to life, and how a new version of the software promises to transform access to library treasures across the UK.

Librarians wishing to mount a public display of historic books and manuscripts immediately encounter a range of inherent problems. The content of books is contained over many pages but – unless an item is disbound – in most exhibition spaces it is only possible to display a maximum of two pages at a time, with the book opened at a single point, protected by a glass case and often under low lighting.

The contrast with objects such as jewellery, ceramics or paintings is stark: whereas such items can be fully appreciated in the context of a traditional display case, given good labelling and a suitable selection of surrounding items, books and manuscripts similarly displayed expose only a small fraction of the visual and textual information they contain, with two pages having to stand in for many others that cannot be shown simultaneously.

## A VIRTUAL BOOK SYSTEM

Recent advances in technology have brought unprecedented opportunities to create high-quality digital images of collection items which can then be manipulated in a variety of settings. With this in mind, the British Library's

'PUBLIC LIBRARIES HAVE BEEN ASKED TO SUBMIT THE TREASURES FROM THEIR COLLECTIONS THAT THEY CONSIDER MOST DESERVES THE *TURNING THE PAGES 2.0* TREATMENT'

Creative Services team approached Armadillo Systems to collaborate on the development of a 3-D 'virtual book' system, initially for use in the British Library's exhibition galleries in London.

The resulting system, dubbed *Turning The Pages™*, was launched in 1998 and was an immediate success. For the first time, visitors were able to browse through a selection of pages from the Lindisfarne Gospels, using a touch-screen interface that allowed them to 'turn' each page rendered on the screen. 3-D animation mimicked the appearance of the page being turned, creating a thrilling and interactive experience. As well as being able to flip back and forth through the pages of the virtual text, users were able to magnify sections and call up textual or audio commentary on the Gospels.

A succession of other 'virtual books' followed, including the Sherborne Missal and Sultan Baybars' Qur'an, but the next big step forward was in 2001, when *Turning The Pages™* was made available online.

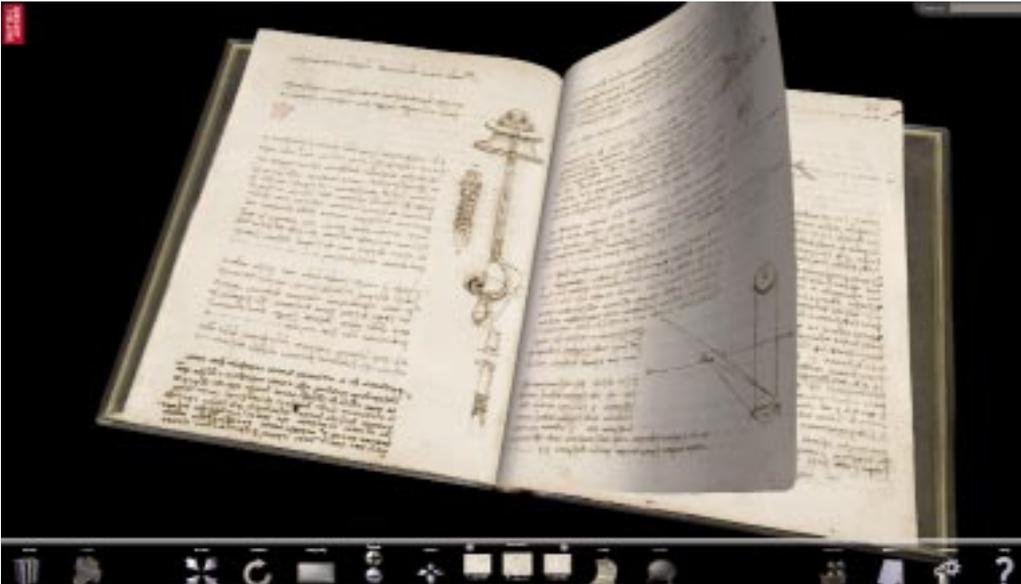
The system was conceived as a touch-screen solution and I was always dubious whether it had a future on the web. The huge numbers who have visited the website since it launched proves overwhelmingly that there is a desire to interact with books by turning their pages – even if you have to click and drag a mouse to do it.

BELOW:  
Mercator's Atlas of Europe in *Turning The Pages 2.0* format. The original was compiled in the 1570s by master cartographer Gerardus Mercator.



BELOW:

The Codex Arundel, one of Leonardo da Vinci's original notebooks. The 'virtual reunification' of Arundel with Codex Leicester, which is owned by Bill Gates, took place at the launch of Windows Vista and *Turning the Pages* 2.0 in January 2007.



## A MUST-VISIT WEBSITE

Fifteen *Turning The Pages*™ texts are now available via the British Library website ([www.bl.uk/onlinegallery/ttp/ttpbooks.html](http://www.bl.uk/onlinegallery/ttp/ttpbooks.html)) and the launch of each text has been accompanied by widespread national and international media coverage, as well as large increases in visitor numbers to the website. When the *Turning The Pages*™ version of Lewis Carroll's original manuscript of *Alice's Adventures Underground* went live, the site attracted over 30,000 visitors in a single weekend. For many web users around the globe, *Turning The Pages*™ has been their first encounter with the British Library and its collections and the system has undoubtedly helped the Library's website establish itself as one of the 'must-visits' of the Internet.

The next phase of the system's evolution came earlier this year with the launch of *Turning The Pages* 2.0. This latest version was developed with the support of Microsoft, who wanted to use the system to showcase a range of new features of the Windows Vista operating system, which launched in January 2007. The first *Turning The Pages* 2.0 items to be launched were Leonardo da Vinci's notebooks, Codex Arundel and Codex Leicester – an event which received worldwide media coverage.

## NEW FEATURES

*Turning The Pages* 2.0 can do many things that the earlier versions of the software couldn't. The page turns are more realistic. We can recreate vellum and paper page turns, add shadows and lighting effects, which will make gold illumination glint as the page is turned. The book appears in a much more real 3-D work space, allowing the user to 'pick up' the book and rotate it, take a look at the binding and hold it closer or further away, just as you might a real book.

BELOW:

**Mozart's 'Thematic Catalogue' records the composer's compositions in the last seven years of his life. He made the last entry in the catalogue just three weeks before his premature death in December 1791. The 'virtual book' version of the catalogue includes 75 audio excerpts.**



You can add other books to the work area too: this is a great advantage to those who want to examine two or more books side by side. The real steps forward the Windows Vista version makes are the search facility, the ability to make personal and group notes and the opportunity to interact with other users around the world who are viewing the books online.

For the British Library – and for other institutions looking to use *Turning The Pages* 2.0 – the most important advance of all is the new system's ability to 'build' the book itself. If a file of pages scanned already exists, the system will create these as a book in just a few minutes – which allowed the Library to make *Turning The Pages* 2.0 versions of all its other virtual texts available within days of the system's launch.

## A COMPETITION

Through May and June 2007 the British Library, in partnership with Microsoft and the Society of Chief Librarians (SCL), is running a competition to allow public libraries to have their own treasures put online. Public libraries have been asked to submit the treasures from their collections that they consider most deserves the *Turning The Pages* 2.0 treatment. Four winners will have their items digitised, converted into 'virtual texts' and hosted on the British Library website for three years.

For further details see:  
[www.bl.uk/librarycompetition](http://www.bl.uk/librarycompetition)

I would like to think that 2.0 will have a leading role in how digitised books are presented on the web. Now the software has been developed it will be made available as a toolkit which hopefully will allow many thousands of books to be presented in this way.

**Clive Izard is Head of Creative Services at the British Library.**

# ENDPIECE: GREENER PRINT

There are many ways in which you can reduce the environmental impact of your print and publications. Here are some points to consider:

- Ask your designer to provide proofs as PDF files rather than paper prints, and to design and specify publications that minimise their environmental impact.
- The print process can be a wasteful and potentially polluting activity. You should choose a printer with good environmental credentials – look for ISO14001 registration (an accreditation concerned with 'environmental management'), FSC (Forest Stewardship Council) certification, and an

environmental policy. Some printers also only print using renewable energy.

- Digital printing is more environmentally friendly than litho printing as it doesn't need aluminium printing-plates and is largely chemical free.
- With litho printing, the printer should use recycled aluminium printing-plates, which require a fraction of the energy of new plates. Organic vegetable oil based 'eco-inks' are also far better than the older petroleum-based inks with their toxic and persistent metal-based pigments.
- There is an excellent choice of paper stock that is either part or wholly recycled, with excellent print quality. At the very least you should specify FSC certified paper from

sustainably managed forests. White paper is bleached using powerful and potentially harmful chemicals. Here you should use paper that is TCF (Total Chlorine Free), which is bleached without using chlorine, a dangerous environmental pollutant.

- Make your audience aware of your publication's environmental status by including recycled and/or FSC logos.
- If you are really keen, check out websites such as [www.greenbiz.com/resources/printing](http://www.greenbiz.com/resources/printing) for further advice and information.

We will consider some of these points when the journal's printing contract is next renewed!

**David Masters MAHI, Commissioning Editor**

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