interpretation

number 11 autumn 1978

THE SOCIETY

The Society for the Interpretation of Britain's Heritage was formed in April 1975 to provide a forum for people engaged in studying Britain's heritage and in both planning and managing interpretive programmes and facilities which relate to this heritage.

It draws its members from a wide range of organisations - including local authorities, statutory and educational bodies and major voluntary organisations - engaged in interpretation of one kind or another.

Copies of the constitution, of the consultative document which led to the formation of the Society and membership application forms may be obtained from the Secretary.

THE OFFICERS

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THE NEWSLETTER

No 11, October 1978 ISSN 0306-8897

'Interpretation', the newsletter of the Society for the Interpretation of Britain's Heritage, is published three times a year, in February, June and October. It is distributed free to members. Non-members may buy copies at 70p each or £2 per annum (including postage).

Copy date for issue no 12 is Monday 22 January 1979.

Printed in Great Britain by G J Lawrence & Co (Printers) Ltd, 122a Chase Side, Enfield, Middlesex EN2 OON

INTERPRETATION

A SURVEY SURVEYED

The questionnaire in the last issue provoked - if that describes a 3% response - many helpful comments. Not all the response it provoked in us will be evident in this issue but plans are laid ...

Members said the newsletter 'stimulates', 'lessens isolation', 'broadens views' and shows how others tackle similar problems. News, reports of current practice, and reviews were of most interest; of least interest were long accounts of unremarkable places, designers' jargon, plans rather than achievements and, confusingly, reports of meetings because they were too long (for some) or too short (for others).

In general, more technical information, evaluation of techniques, visitor studies, analysis of new facilities and news of people and places would be welcomed in place of 'long ego trips', commercial news and (nostra culpa) facetious headings.

A quarterly, rather than whatever one calls a thrice-yearly, publication would suit the majority. (In view of the present gestation delays, this improvement will have to be delayed too). Larger print, or A4 format, would appeal to a number - one tends to demand the other and would cost more. An index would be useful.

Despite efforts made in the last issue, even more uniformity of headings and fewer typefaces (there aren't a lot, really) and more illustrations were wanted. One or two had seen improvements recently.

The newsletter was seen just as that, not as a potential 'heavyweight'. Let it evolve, one member said, perhaps noting that it was still relatively embryonic.

A PROPOSED SCHEME FOR THE NEWSLETTER

Among thoughts from members was one proposing that the newsletter should concentrate on two areas with a variable third category.

1. The simple noting of news - what's happening in the field of interpretation - and reviews or short notices of relevant publications.

2. The subjects of the Society's meetings - not so much reports of what visits were made and where dinners were held as summaries of the talks. These to be written by the person giving the talk who could be asked in advance if he/she would like to submit a, say, two or five hundred word summary for circulation to the Society in the Newsletter. More important papers could be given fuller treatment. This would be of some value to the many members who cannot get to the meetings and to those who heard the talks.

3. A flexible category of articles submitted by anyone with anything to say - such as reports on various projects - rather as happens now in fits and starts.

An informal editorial team has discussed many of the suggestions made and over the next few issues, more editorial control will be exercised and more articles commissioned. This may mean rejections of some material, but that seems to be what is required. Key conference papers will be sought well in advance, to appear in full after Society meetings, while general reports, will be kept to a minimum. A 'foretaste' article on each future meeting will appear in the preceding issue.

The present editor sees the time for a change at the helm - and indeed on the bridge - fast approaching. The next issue will be the twelfth and a round dozen seems a good number of voyages to retire on. All offers ...

IN COMMITTEE

The first committee meeting of the Society was held in London on 20 July 1978. All officers were present, including the retiring Treasurer. The following notes are a narrative of the minutes.

1. It was agreed to seek approval to changes in the Constitution in order to make the Society into a charity. This will have the important benefit that grants made by the Carnegie United Kingdom Trust, in particular, are free of income tax. The changes required are: membership must be open to all; and no member may receive any benefit in money or goods at the cost of the charity. It was agreed to seek the necessary approval to these changes at the November meeting of the Society.

2. A review was made of the Society meetings held so far. Suggestions for future meetings were considered; it was decided to hold the next meetings as follows:

1979 - April AGM in Newcastle or Durham
September in Norfolk
November in London

1980 - April AGM in Glasgow/Ayrshire
May/June in USA (extra meeting)

In addition it was agreed to commend to members that extra day meetings could be valuable on a local basis.

3. Following the view of the AGM that the newsletter should remain in its present form but that other media should be sought for commissioned articles on interpretation, it was decided to aim for a seminar with prepared papers and recorded discussions in London in November 1979. It was agreed to explore with the Carnegie United Kingdom Trust and the publishers, E & F N Spon Ltd, whether publication of such proceedings might be arranged.

M H Orrom, Secretary

Postponed Visit

The visit of Prof John Hanna to this country reported in the last issue of 'Interpretation' has had to be postponed. John will now be coming for 3-4 weeks in May 1979 and is keen to address relevant groups particularly in University Recreation or Planning Courses. An itinerary is being prepared and anyone wishing to host John Hanna or have him lecture should contact Terry Stevens at 'Dol-werdd', Maenclochog, Dyfed. (Tel: home 499, work Haverfordwest 3131 x63)

WHITHER ABBEYDALE?

IAN PARKIN INVESTIGATES

We visited Abbeydale on the Saturday morning of the Peak District weekend. After a brief introduction by Peter Bennett, Keeper of Industry and Technology in Sheffield City Museums Department, we were escorted around the site by four voluntary guides - each in his or her way extremely knowledgeable yet largely unable to communicate the real essence and character of the once thriving works. This was expressed, perhaps less eloquently, yet infinitely more graphically by three craftsmen operating in various workshops on the site - this provided the animation and living history which was the theme of the weekend.

On arrival it is impossible not to be impressed with Abbeydale: it is a late eighteenth and early nineteenth century water-powered scythe and steelworks comprising a complex of industrial buildings surrounding a large central courtyard. The buildings are in extremely good condition and the various workshops are full to overflowing with various tools and artefacts (many restored to working condition) depicting the development of the steel industry. The character of the era was there for all to savour, but somehow the atmosphere was missing and many of us left with a sense of extreme disappointment at an opportunity missed.

Production ceased on the site in 1933 and in 1935 it was purchased by the late Alderman J G Graves who gave it to the City of Sheffield. The complex was restored in the 1960s as an Industrial Museum by a voluntary society - the Council for the Conservation of Sheffield Antiquities and was then opened to the public by the Museums Department in 1970.

EASY TO CRITICISE

It is so easy to criticise after a fleeting visit without a real opportunity to ascertain the political and departmental background which makes Abbeydale what it is. However, with this proviso several points struck us which were further discussed in a study group on the Sunday morning.

Arriving at the site you can purchase a publication outlining the history of the site, describing with photographs the various processes etc. Without it, you can obtain only disjointed impressions: even with it, however, it is not possible to be taken back to the dark, dirty, noisy and smelly environment of the early 19th century when the crucible steel furnace was operating at temperatures of 1500°C. It seemed to a number of us that a short introductory A/V programme perhaps associated with the exhibition and both located close to and clearly visible from the car park would establish from the beginning the atmosphere and understanding so important when visiting an historical site like this.

The lack of visible orientation boards as you leave your car must lead to people aimlessly wandering around the site. The leaflet recommends the exhibition as the starting point but this was not immediately visible and was missed by many of us. Similarly as you visit the various workshops, the tilt forge, boring shop, grinding shop, etc, it is difficult, without a guide or a working craftsman, to appreciate what really happened. The lack of information attractively presented on display boards seemed a serious disadvantage. Working models of various complicated machines might also be useful.

SKILLS AND ENTHUSIASM

Whilst the workshops were full of tools, machinery, etc, they came to life only with the presence of the working craftsmen who operate on perhaps 10 days a year. (We were given a special extra showing). These men with countless years of experience in specific aspects of the steel industry and with numerous stories to tell, delighted us with their skills and their enthusiasm to educate and entertain. How else could you really appreciate the extreme heat of the crucible furnace, or the delicate skills of the cutler? Yet we understood that little effort had been made to record the stories of these craftsmen - one of whom at 84 was about to retire with no suitable replacement.

On an average day the visitor without a guide (the multi-lingual touch was nice) or craftsmen needs some enrichment which could be provided by various interpretive media. Better leaflets, orientation, an A/V programme, discreet information boards and even attendants (perhaps retired steel-workers operating in the form of interpretive rangers) would help. It was difficult but to feel that the site management and development was of low priority to the Museums Department with the extensive Kelham Island project soon to be opened. Ferns were growing amongst the tilt-hammers and even the shop closed for lunch while our party of 50 potential customers was still on the site. The income from the shop could presumably be a valuable contribution towards improving the interpretation.

HARD WORK

This is not to say that all was disappointing. There were some lovely touches - the piano playing in the manager's house, the excellent treatment of the worker's cottage, etc, but the overpowering feeling was of the potential not being realised as it has been in places like Ironbridge. We were lucky to watch the craftsmen put together a scythe, and the cutter delicately produce a pen-knife blade, but we felt that the average visitor on an ordinary day would have to work hard really to gain from the experience.

The Abbeydale View

After writing this piece, Ian Parkin phoned Peter Bennett. He has sent us a synopsis of the 'Abbeydale Response'.

Their philosophy, which apparently started with the original curator Roger Leadbetter, is totally geared to the 're-creation' of the atmosphere of a late 18th and early 19th century industrial complex. This means a total absence of signs, interpretive boards, etc and even no telephone wires.

The interpretation is based on a helpful assistant at the entrance directing the visitor to the exhibition; the exhibition itself, which provides an introduction to the steel industry of Sheffield; the 5p leaflet (which they want to improve); an A/V programme available on request, but very general; and volunteer guides - 20 paid helpers who are available on advance request.

The visitor is expected to 'work' to gain his experience. There is a limited staff (Peter and an engineer), supplemented by the volunteer guides but they try to get some piece of machinery working during every visit.

NO PLOUGHING BACK

Any income from the shop and the cafe goes into the city funds and cannot be ploughed back into the site - so much for far-sighted local government! The shop was closed because of the problems of getting staff to work flexibly.

There are no specific plans for the future. They would like to rewrite the leaflet and also to produce a guide for school-children, given funds and staff. They will also be revamping the exhibition area when Kelham Island opens in 1982; the present exhibition will be going to Kelham and that will give the opportunity to get over the atmosphere of the site.

The penknife man - who will be replaced by another craftsman sooner or later - was not displaying an original (Abbeydale) craft and they are unlikely to tape his impressions. There are problems of cost and a lot of tapes have been made anyway.

In summary, while Ian supports Peter Bennett's view of Abbeydale as one of the world's foremost industrial hamlets, he is less happy with the management approach which seems to favour the specialist or serious enquirer and is not geared to encouraging 'average' people to come, enjoy and learn from an important historical, educational and leisure resource.

We would welcome other members' views both on the particular case of Abbeydale or on the more general subject of how one presents a real interpretive opportunity as against a created one.

PEAK REPORT

The conference took as its theme 'Interpretation of Historic Sites and Living History Programmes'. The first session set the scene with three talks on The Land, The Buildings and The People of the Peak Park. Tony Escritt began.

THE LAND

The Peak District, which was originally a royal hunting forest, has a long history of visitors attracted by its scenery and peacefulness. Its landscape is influenced by the underlying geology; the 'Dark Peak' to the north is underlain by millstone grit, whilst the 'White Peak' to the south consists of carboniferous limestone. Many minerals occur in the limestone and mining activities have greatly influenced the landscape. Perhaps one of the most distinctive features of the area is the abundance of dry-stone walls. The problems presented to conservationists in the area today are typified by the need to repair and replace these walls, which provide valuable shelter for stock and wildlife in an age when mass-produced fencing costs about a quarter of the price. The Peak District landscape is a complex thing, made up of many features and influenced by many factors; the emphasis must be on the conservation (not preservation) of the whole.

THE BUILDINGS

Gerald Haythornthwaite next spoke about the area's buildings. He began by emphasising the harmony of vernacular buildings with the landscape and the importance of colours and textures. He felt that the architectural heritage ended in the 1850s and that this should be used as a standard. There is a great danger of losing our building heritage and we need to prevent the unnecessary demolition of buildings, from the large halls down to humble cottages.

In many cases efforts are being made to design modern buildings in the Park in harmony with existing groups and the landscape. The introduction of facing blocks which look just like the old limestone blocks but are much cheaper has been a great help. Problems still occur, particularly in the grouping of buildings and in the design and location of agricultural buildings, over which there is little planning control.

THE PEOPLE

Finally, John Widdowson, of the Centre for English Cultural Tradition at Sheffield University, spoke on the people. The local population, which has been declining since 1850, still has a long continuity with the area. The drift from the countryside has coincided with a rise in the number of visitors to the Park. This change has been slower in the hills, where many old farming traditions still survive. Tradition includes more than quaint customs and old buildings; it means the everyday way of life of local people. Although many local traditions (of which the many well-dressing ceremonies are the best known), have survived. Dr Widdowson contends that they are often of relatively recent origin and arose for practical reasons. They are often romanticised by folklorists.

Villages are much less isolated than they used to be, but in some ways people, especially in isolated farms are more isolated than formerly, when they would be visited by the milk lorry, the postman, etc. 'Incomers' in old communities bring advantages and disadvantages.

In conclusion, Dr Widdowson emphasised the importance of words and dialects in understanding people. This binds people together and gives them a sense of 'belonging'. All this is part of our heritage and we ignore language and traditions at our peril.

LIVING HISTORY

John Hodgson, the Curator of Sudbury Hall, a National Trust property which has pioneered the use of living history programmes, opened the next session. Living history attempts to interpret buildings and historical happenings by the use of costumed actors who re-enact events that might have occurred. This is really a logical progression from demonstrations where often the audience are restricted to watching the performance. Actually to involve the audience in the event, in costume if possible, is even better. Sudbury Hall caters only for children, but there is great potential for the involvement of adults of all ages in living history programmes of this kind. Adult programmes are planned for next year.

The living history performance which followed was a 15 minute sketch by a local group in the main hall of the building. In this short time, the characters of the people who lived at Losehill came over very strongly, and provided much interest and discussion later. The general consensus was that this method of interpretation was very successful and had really brought the house and its inhabitants to life.

MOBILE HISTORY

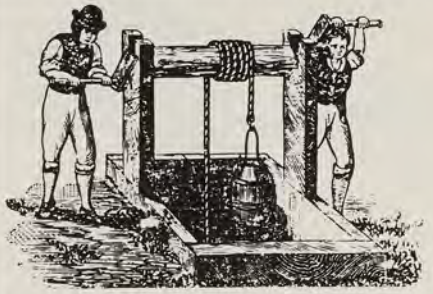
The session finished with a look over the Derbyshire Museums Service travelling exhibition. An old travelling library bus has been fitted out with a recreation of a Victorian cottage. This can be booked by schools, libraries, museums, etc.

COPING WITH THE PROBLEMS

After dinner, Keith Garton of Derbyshire County Council and Clive Prior of the Peak Park Planning Board spoke briefly about the projects which we were to see the next day. The problems of managing a National Park with 14½ million people 'on the doorstep' were emphasised, and we were shown the range of facilities which have been provided to cater for visitors.

OUT AND ABOUT

A whole day was devoted to sampling the interpretation at a variety of sites. Members' reactions were encompassed by the Group Discussions reported below.



Members' attitudes were tested by the Losehill Hall Conservation Trail whose booklet is a questionnaire to illustrate the problems of National Parks management by analogies with a small estate.

Sue Adams, Ruth Tillyard

GROUP DISCUSSIONS

Before we left the Peak, we tried to bring together some thoughts on five of the weekend's experiences. The Abbeydale discussion led to the article on page 4.

THE PAST IN THE PRESENT

'Living History' was seen to bring understanding and to create an atmosphere for enquiry. But it must be entertaining and must relate to its audience. There was also a danger in making the past seem fun when it wasn't.

While minor inaccuracies didn't detract from the general impression, care was needed. There was obviously commercial potential if actors could gear their performances to different audiences. The greatest danger was if it 'caught on'. Then everyone would have to do it!

RICHARD ARKWRIGHT, WHERE ARE YOU NOW?

The over-riding fears that stemmed from visiting Cromford were two-fold. The controversy between the conservationists and the local authority on the one hand, and the community on the other seemed a time-bomb that could blow the real efforts apart. The 'deadening' effect of the Arkwright Society's ownership of various properties was also cause for

concern. Their cannibalism of mill machinery ground a few teeth too.

Cromford Village and Scarthin

An overall management plan was essential and achieving this could be helped when the recommendations of the DART Study of the Derwent Valley were known. Convincing the locals that Cromford had so much to offer - amidst the traffic - was a task in itself.

KEEP ON TRUCKING ...

Middleton Top Engine House, astride the High Peak Trail, was now hauling up its shortcomings. Its success as an historic entity and an interpretive resource depended much on the wardens. It was still largely in the emergent stage with the visitor told very little. To achieve success, the powerful and evocative relationship of engine house and incline had to be put over.

MINERS' PAVILION

The Mining Museum at Matlock Bath set out to achieve high standards of presentation. In seeking them, however, it may have lost sight of the ordinary visitor's reality. While concentrating on the harshnesses of underground toil, it lacked the human and local realities.

The academic introduction, highlighting geology, was rather remote from the physical and spiritual dominance of the giant water pressure engine. But even that lacked the noise and movement of its working life which could perhaps have been re-created.

The children's climbing shaft was, for them, memorable; an idea which could have been developed with tunnels and 'atmosphere'. The naked, matchstick men failed to convey the bodily tortures of miners at work.

YATES TO DATE

THE YATES COMMITTEE: INTERIM REPORT

The Yates Committee published its Interim Report in August. Set up by the Secretaries of State for Education and Science and the Environment 'to make recommendations on the future training of staff in the management of resources and facilities for sport, and for all forms of outdoor recreation', the Committee is tackling the problem in two stages.

Firstly, it has decided that it needs to obtain 'a sound understanding of the organisations concerned with recreation, their philosophies and objectives and the roles of the managers within them': the Interim Report represents a summary of their approach to date and sets out the main problems and issues as they see them.

The Second Stage is the formal invitation of submissions of evidence before 31 October from interested organisations, groups and individuals on the issues set out and on any other matter which may be seen as within the Committee's Terms of Reference. It is only after this second stage that they will announce any conclusions or recommendations, although it is interesting to note that the Government in establishing the Committee made it clear that 'in the present economic situation it would be unable to endorse any recommendations which would be likely to involve increased central or local government expenditure'.

During the next stage of their work the Committee will be concerned with four main issues:

a) the nature, organisation and scope of recreation provision

b) the role of managers at various levels - their recruitment and career patterns

c) the adequacy of initial and continuing training for the development of recreation managers,

d) possible future developments in recreation provision which should be reflected in the training of managers.

During its initial fact-finding stage the Committee established four Study Groups to look at various facets of recreation provision. The Group looking at resource-based recreation - the area encompassing countryside recreation and interpretation - has a strong representation of people associated in some way with SIBH. Chaired by Robin Herbert (Deputy Chairman, Countryside Commission) it includes Colin Bonsey (Hampshire), Ken Robinson (Beaulieu), Evelyn Tomlinson (Member Peak Park Joint Planning Board) and Graham Taylor as Adviser.

This Group has identified that the management of resource-based recreation is about:

a) enabling people to use the resource

b) enhancing the experience of the user (through interpretation), and

c) providing, developing and managing facilities.

It suggests that a manager (particularly at a high level) requires a range of knowledge and skills derived from resource management (depending on the nature of the resource involved) plus an appreciation of the nature of recreation and business management including a knowledge of marketing. It has been found that almost all the planners and managers in this field at present were originally trained as specialists in other fields and few have qualifications in recreation management. In addition little training exists which draws together the necessary skills required.

The Committee feel that as yet there does not appear to be a developed profession or career in resource-based recreation management and it needs to consider whether this is necessary, and whether it warrants its own particular initial training. To answer these questions the Committee hope to establish who the managers are and whether there is a common core of tasks within their respective job specifications to establish specific training curricula.

The Committee obviously has a long way to go and the experience and advice from a wide range of organisations (including SIBH?) will surely lead to a clearer understanding of the complex problems involved. Interpretation is but one element of recreation management and yet it requires a wide range of skills - planners, researchers, designers, illustrators, and communicators with the user. If it seems difficult to integrate all these skills within one training programme how much more difficult it is to pull together the principles related to the management of other elements of recreation.

It will be interesting to see what emerges!

I C A Parkin

Appealing News

The £80,000 Appeal for the Avebury Centre that was launched at the beginning of the year is now nearing the £50,000 mark. The last event which took place at Biddestone recently produced a sum in excess of £5,000. The Wiltshire Folk Life Society 'took over' the village for an extended weekend when 65 different folk life events were run and some 8,000-9,000 people attended. The events included demonstrations of horse ploughing, thatching, stone-walling, rare breed poultry, archery, weaving, potting and spinning. About a dozen of the houses in this Cotswold part of Wiltshire were open when various demonstrations of crafts together with floral displays were shown. The whole village seemed to participate and not to mind the incursion of such a large number of people. The suggestion has been made that this kind of event should be an annual fixture in the Wiltshire Calendar.

The Centre for studies itself is now coming to a point of finally 'getting off the ground' and the Chairman of this recording section, Victor Chinnery (who is himself a national name in early furniture) is now preparing guidelines over a wide spectrum of interests. The interest and support of others outside of the county will be welcomed.

Harold Cory

THE FRENCH CONNECTION

BELOW GROUND IN PERIGORD

There is no better place to study prehistory than the valleys of the Vezere, the Dordogne and the Lot, which lie on the west side of the Massif Central in the Perigord and Quercy region of France. The art and industry of 200,000 years of prehistory are recorded in hundreds of caves and grottoes, many of which have now been closed to the public to halt the advance of decay which discovery had brought. Lascaux and some of the other

Centre d'Art Prehistorique

caves have museums, but my wife and I decided to go to Le Thot, which proclaims itself 'Premier Centre d'Art Prehistorique'.

CLICK OF TIME

Le Thot lies on the plateau above the Vezere valley, between Montignac and Les Eysies. We found it in the sizzling heat of mid-afternoon, a stunning building of golden-brown random masonry walls, looking like a limestone cliff, with a cave-like entrance at the base. A spacious reception hall on the first floor opens directly on to a safari park beyond, where there are bison, Tartary horses and wild boars, but that is for later. The eye is drawn almost at once to a series of cartoon figures of hairy men with clubs. You have to smile; they represent just about all that most of us know about the life and achievements of prehistoric man. A huge chronological table (it really is a table) on which are placed diminutive models of the great architectural wonders, shows at a glance how vast was the span of unrecorded human history compared with the mere click of time since the invention of writing.

We moved down and onward through a series of cavern-like spaces at various levels. No guides or directions are needed but there is a natural sequence, and early on we saw a film presentation 'Naissance de l'Art' which succeeds remarkably well in creating an illusion of walking through primeval forest. Here and there, through the undergrowth we catch a glimpse of an eye, movement, and the suggestion of animal forms. The sound track provides an accompaniment of grunts, rustles and the occasional radiophonic screech.

In another 'cavern' we were given the English version of an audio-visual presentation which employs an illumination technique similar to that used in planetaria. Reproductions of cave paintings from Nialx, Altamira and Pech-Merle are suspended at various heights and these are illuminated in turn (sometimes quite tiny details are spotlit) as an accompaniment to a taped lecture. The audience is seated and voice reproductions from a number of sources give the impression that a guide is moving about the cave with torch in hand.

POWER TO COMMUNICATE

There is an extensive range of study material about the prehistoric past of man, and a display of sixty large colour transparencies of some of the most celebrated cave paintings, many of which may no longer be seen by the public. The superbly-displayed replicas of sculptures and engravings is perhaps the most impressive exhibit. We had reached this point without discovering much more about the motivation for cave art, but we now had no doubt that these beautiful, and sometimes disturbing works of art have the power to communicate to us in a language which is at once familiar and understandable.

One could not attempt an evaluation of this remarkable museum without an extensive knowledge of the cave art which may still be studied underground. So long as there are caves open to the public, Le Thot could never be a satisfactory substitute, but it is an exciting place to begin a tour of the prehistoric sites of the region.

If we had doubts about interpretation with all the technological stops pulled out, it was only a short journey along the Vezere to the Village Troglodytique de La Madeleine near Les Eyzies. The

La Madeleine Visitor Centre

guide here was also the site archaeologist, and interpreter at the most direct and illuminating level. For many years he has been unravelling the layered history of the continuous occupation of the riverside grottoes from the prehistoric eras to medieval times and his account of the site was delivered with infectious enthusiasm.

ELEGANT SIMPLICITY

There is a visitor centre at La Madeleine, situated in a wood above the limestone cliff which surmounts the grottoes. Flat roofed and partly open-sided, the building has basic facilities and an enquiries counter at one end, and an open space for illumination in the centre, filled with the boulders and native shrubs of the surrounding woodland. Maps and photographs, which provide an introduction to the site, are mounted on panels on stainless steel wires drawn from floor to roof. The outer walls may be opened or closed to suit weather conditions. It is a delightful building of elegant simplicity. I hope it works well; it deserves to.

Derek Baylis

BOOKSHELF

COLLINS E J T 'The Economy of Upland Britain 1750-1950 : an illustrated review'. Centre for Agricultural Strategy Paper 4 May 1978. Price £2.20 (post free). University of Reading.

Maybe you are involved in some form of interpretation of the human environment in an upland area. If so the background research for your interpretive work will have taken you to study many local and region-specific texts. So often in these circumstances the need for an overview of the upland economy on a British scale has been obvious. Indeed, perhaps one of the reasons why so many excellent interpretive programmes fail to take the opportunity of placing their particular situation into the wider context, has been the interpreter's lack of understanding of the whole. This could be met by an appropriate volume on the subject, and as such Dr E J T Collins' contribution must be welcomed.

This relatively short text should be regarded only as an introduction, but in this capacity it usefully analyses the pattern of economic activity in Britain's upland zone from 1750-1950. The book, well illustrated with evocative and interesting black and white photographs, many of which had never been published, relates a well-reasoned text to over 30 pages of excellent supporting tables and maps. The easy-to-read examination of the role of agriculture, forestry, fishing, mining, manufacturing, etc, makes Dr Collins' book of interest to both the specialist and the non-specialist.

The 120-page book is an introductory forerunner to the forthcoming volumes of symposium papers on the Future of Upland Britain also to be published by CAS. These volumes will contain over 100 detailed papers on all aspects of the Upland including one on the Role of Interpretation in an Upland situation. If Ted Collins' volume is an appetiser then the remaining publications are awaited with keen interest.

Terry Stevens

MUSEUMS ASSOCIATION INFORMATION SHEETS

Several new or revised ones are now available: 'Useful addresses for museum curators' by Geoff Stansfield, price 55p; 'Museum shops' price 90p, 'Photographic processes, a glossary and chart' by Arthur Gill, price 70p; 'Conservation and museum lighting' by Garry Thompson and Linda Bullock, price 60p; and 'Copyright law concerning works of art, photographs and the written and spoken word' by Charles Gibbs-Smith, price 80p. Remittance with orders please to 87 Charlotte Square, London W1.

ENGLISH HERITAGE MONITOR 1978

This book, published at £3 by the English Tourist Board, contains a mass of useful statistics relating to the conservation, presentation and public use of England's architectural heritage. The section on presentation shows ownership and opening arrangements, and prices charged. It describes the different sorts of interpretive services, such as guided tours, education officers and teachers' packs. It also lists associated museums and events. According to the monitor, there are at least 568 town trails, of which 132 are in London, and five heritage centres. It touches on the interesting topic of revenue from sales of souvenirs, of which guidebooks and postcards are the most popular, followed by medallions, tea towels, slide and camera film!

NORTH DOWNS WAY MAPS BOOK

A book of Ordnance Survey-based maps, showing the route of the North Downs Way Long Distance Path, was published by the Countryside Commission in time for the path's official opening on 30 September. (Price £1.75).

RURAL RECREATION AND TOURISM ABSTRACTS

This quarterly journal provides up to date information on recreation and tourism, including information on policy, planning, management, marketing, information sources, types of tourism, outdoor recreation, nature conservation, health factors and cultural and social aspects. Annual subscription £20. A sample issue is available from Commonwealth Agricultural Bureaux, Central Sales, Farnham House, Farnham Royal, Slough, SL2 3BN.

NATIONAL PARK GUIDE

The Peak District National Park has just issued its own new guidebook - 'First and Last' which is complementary to the HMSO guide. Written by Roland Smith, with photos by Mick Williams and designed by Shelagh Gregory, it proves that colour is not essential to a quality production. Cost is 80p, from the Peak National Park office in Bakewell, or Information Centres.

Project Decision Talks

KNIFE-EDGE MEETING FOR NORFOLK HERITAGE

A meeting took place on 29 September to show people what the project has achieved so far, and what its potential is for the future. The project reaches the end of its second period of grant aid, and Norfolk County Council has to decide whether to take it on as a permanent commitment.

The morning was devoted to two talks, about the original Norfolk Carnegie Project, and its successor Norfolk Heritage Project. After lunch, there was a coach ride to see three of the sites, followed by an appraisal session.

This consisted of four short talks to show how the project has affected various 'interests'. The County Planning Officer, John Shaw, and the Director of the Norfolk Museums Service, Francis Cheetham, explained how the project fits in with the services they run, and Andrew Pierssene explained what the project had been like for the team working on it. Terry Robinson, the Interpretive Officer for the Countryside Commission, assessed the reaction of the consumers and, comparing other projects, mentioned some areas of potential development.

The discussion session afterwards showed that there is a lot of interest in and support for the project in Norfolk, although the informal visit next day was poorly supported.

FOREST SHOW

EPPING FOREST CENTENARY EXHIBITION

On 23 May this year the Duke of Gloucester opened an exhibition in the Conservation Centre at High Beach, commemorating the passing of the Epping Forest Act in 1878. Since then it has been touring all over Essex and will continue to do so for a year or so.

The exhibition was designed by Richard Daynes FSIA, who has been Consultant Designer to the Conservators for a number of years.

It tells the story of the Forest from its days as a Royal hunting preserve through the exploitations of its natural resources in the 17th and 18th centuries and the attempts at enclosure during the 19th century. It ends with the modern day problems of management and conservation. Hence the theme 'from Kings to Commoners'.

There are eight units and each one deals imaginatively with a different aspect of the story. Units dealing directly with the Forest are flanked by large cut-out tree shapes into which the rest of the display panels slot. The designer felt that however interested people were in the subject, there was a danger that confronted by off-the-peg flat display panels and tidy lifeless graphics their interest would quickly evaporate. So he designed each unit to be visually different, using materials, textures, cut-outs and special effects which stimulate the eye by their variety and underline the main points of the story in a simple but effective way.

In the early planning stage, the Conservators sent out a questionnaire to interested local authorities, asking where they could erect such an exhibit.

The replies were very illuminating. Most authorities wanted something that could be placed around the walls of large public rooms so that their letting potential would not be affected by the exhibit. Others had only corridor space available. At a meeting of local authority representatives the designer worked out with delegates the square footage available on the average site and the sort of hazards that might be encountered in the way of narrow doors and winding stairs!

It was with all these constraints in mind that the display units gradually evolved.

Each unit is one-sided and not more than 2' 9" wide; each is independent to give greatest flexibility for positioning. Indeed, where space is very confined some units may be left out altogether without completely disrupting the story line. Most units are self-illuminating with warm-colour fluorescent tubes and can be linked together in two sets of four or in couples, depending on the availability of power points. Lighting plays an important part in the unit called 'Cockney Paradise'. This tells the story of the crowds of Londoners from the East End who used to flock to the Forest every weekend and bank holiday. The display is built to resemble a fairground roundabout complete with coloured lights which illuminate lots of nostalgic photographics. This particular unit is made in four segments and separates like slices of a cake when travelling.

All the units break down into easily manageable sections and the exhibition can be assembled by three men in three hours.

INTERPRETATION AT RUTLAND WATER

As far as we are aware, Rutland Water is unique in the history of reservoir construction in the degree to which cooperation has taken place between the conservation bodies and the reservoir planners. This cooperation ensured that, from the earliest stages of planning, the opportunity was taken to enhance the wildlife interest by manipulating habitats which would be attractive to wildlife. The result is an attractively landscaped reservoir (albeit at the expense of rich farmland) which provides facilities for public recreation whilst supporting an important new nature reserve of special significance as a wildfowl refuge.

The key to the success of the Nature Reserve was the agreement by the Water Authority to segregate the main recreational use of fishing and sailing from the sheltered areas of shallow water at the western end of the reservoir by the construction of a series of curved clay banks (bunds). These bunds enclose three lagoons of 30, 40 and 50 acres which together with a narrow strip of land amounting to 350 acres stretching around seven miles of shoreline, forms the Nature Reserve. Under the terms of the agreement between the Leicestershire and Rutland Trust for Nature Conservation and the Anglian Water Authority, the Reserve is managed by the Trust and the cost of management underwritten by the Water Authority.

OVERALL PLAN

At an ad hoc committee set up in 1972 to consider interpretation within the Nature Reserve, it was recommended that an overall interpretive plan be prepared for the whole of the reservoir to embrace water management, sailing, fishing and nature conservation. Perhaps predictably at that time the proposal was not accepted and the Trust had to confine itself to the planning of interpretation within the Nature Reserve.

The primary objective of the Nature Reserve is the conservation of wildlife but it was clear that in a reservoir and nature reserve of this size it would be possible to allow for substantial public use whilst maintaining the primary objective. Indeed this requirement was included in the terms of the management agreement.

The LRTNC accepted responsibility for the Nature Reserve in 1974 and in March 1975 Tim Appleton was appointed Warden of the Reserve. The imaginative planning of the Nature Reserve and the recruitment of a substantial force of dedicated volunteers owes much to his personality and expertise. Under his guidance an impressive programme of habitat improvement was begun and small armies of volunteers came together at weekends to assist with tree planting, the construction of islands and the laying down of patches of gravel as potential nesting sites for terns and waders. More than 30,000 trees have now been planted, mainly to prevent waterfowl from being disturbed by members of the public moving along the perimeter track. The Water Authority gave invaluable assistance by making equipment and manpower available and by providing most of the trees from their own nursery.

IMPRESSIVE RECORD

The record for the first two years has been most impressive. During the winter of 1975/6 the reservoir began to fill rapidly and over 2,000 wildfowl were recorded in January when the reservoir was only partially full. The flooding of the farmland provided rich feeding and in the second winter numbers reached a record of over 13,000. Large wintering flocks of wildfowl were complemented by excellent summer breeding records and with rare vagrants and passage migrants including Osprey, Hobby and White Stork amongst many others to keep the rarity hunters happy.

The interpretation of wildfowl presents many difficulties and it was felt essential that the interpretive plan should include a Visitor Centre which could serve to introduce the public to the complexities of bird migration, breeding biology and conservation as well as meeting the more obvious needs of providing orientation and information.

The Visitor Centre Study was carried out over a period of three years by a succession of Fulbright Scholars attached to the Department of Museum Studies of the University of Leicester together with permanent staff and students.

THREE ZONES

For management purposes the Reserve is divided into three zones. The first section along the southern shoreline was opened to the public on a restricted basis from Easter 1978. This area borders on to the main body of water but also includes an attractive spinney where Dr Max Wade from Loughborough University is preparing a Nature Trail for the coming season. The Water Authority have constructed two large hides in this part of the Reserve and a third will be built in the next few months. One hide looks on to the main body of water with a view of the small peninsula at Lax Hill where the Bewick Swans and the Bean Geese could be seen to advantage in February 1977.

The second hide faces on to a wader scrape where topsoil has been removed to create a shallow pond attractive to waders. The approaches to the hides are screened by earth banks and by trees which will not really be large enough to form an effective screen for another year or two. The third hide will be located at the very western end of the southern arm of the reservoir where the largest concentrations of waterfowl outside the lagoons can be found.

The second section of the Reserve lies behind the village of Egleton and is intended for the more dedicated and knowledgeable bird watchers including Trust members. The hides in this part of the Reserve have been constructed by volunteers to plans prepared by Tim Appleton. The first hide was financed from the Reserve budget but the cost of materials for the next two hides was donated by a generous benefactor and for a fourth by yet another benefactor.

The local branch of the RSPB is also raising money for a hide and the voluntary wardens, not content with giving up weekends to patrol the Reserve, are to take responsibility for a large hide adjacent to the car park. By the time that this part of the Reserve is opened to the public in January 1979 there will be a total of six wooden 12-seater hides, three tower hides and several smaller hides converted from fibreglass workmen's shelters.

TEACHERS' COURSES

Bookings can be accepted from parties wishing to visit the public part of the Reserve, when one of the wardens will take a conducted tour. Schoolchildren are being catered for through a series of teachers' courses arranged in conjunction with the Leicestershire Education Authority. Teachers attending these courses will be allowed to take school parties to the public part of the Reserve during the week when it is not open to the general public.

Outside the Nature Reserve the Water Authority has constructed a modest Visitor Centre in one of the car parks near to the village of Empingham in which there are displays illustrating the wildlife, archaeology, and water management of the reservoir. A series of leaflets have been produced on Natural History, Technical Information, History and Archaeology, and Trout Fishing and more are planned.

Facilities at the Reservoir have not been widely publicised and visitor use is building up only gradually. There is car parking capacity for 4,000 cars and the parks have been full only on one occasion, last Easter. The gradual build-up in numbers is allowing the Reserve to mature and the tree cover to grow. Useful information is being gathered through visitor surveys carried out by the County Council. The Nature Reserve Visitor Centre has been delayed due to the freezing of grants from the Countryside Commission in the private sector (where would they get better value?) but with luck the Centre will be ready for the 1979 season.

G Stansfield

TORFAEN'S TRUST

The Valley Inheritance, Pontypool

The Torfaen Museum Trust was established in 1977 to develop what is intended to be one of the largest environmental museums operating in Western Europe. The Trust's Director is Adrian Babbidge MA, AMA. Torfaen is the administrative name for the valley of the Afon Llwyd in western Gwent and includes the towns of Cwmbran, Pontypool and Blaenafon - communities which figure largely in any study of Britain's industrial history. Iron making first started here four centuries ago, and it was from Pontypool that the first American iron forges were founded in the early 17th century. What makes Torfaen especially important today is that much of the evidence for this heritage has survived on the ground, and the valley contains some of the most important sites testifying to the development of Britain during the 18th and 19th centuries.

One of the main projects planned by the Trust is to develop an interpretive focus for visitors which will introduce the area's important heritage and relate this to specific sites and monuments managed by the Trust and other agencies operating within the valley. To be known as The Valley Inheritance, the project will be located in the Georgian Stables of Pontypool Park House, a Grade 2 listed building presently undergoing restoration under the supervision of the Borough Architect.

Acme Design have been commissioned to design the exhibition which will include space for annually-changing exhibitions and specialist displays of Pontypool Japan Ware, and for the main interpretive display. In addition to the interpretive function, the building will provide space for an education centre to meet a demand from schools and educational groups visiting the area. It will also house the main offices for the Museum Trust, its central workshop facilities, library and documentation centre. It is hoped that the project will be open to the public in 1980.

Self-guided Trails

THE BOOK WE'VE ALL BEEN WAITING FOR

There are over 400 nature and forest trails, 300 town trails, 50 ancient monuments trails and about 25 farm trails in Britain. The Dartington Amenity Research Trust have prepared a report on self-guided trails, published by the Countryside Commission (CCP 110, price £5). DART's brief was to investigate their objectives, study their impact on visitors and the resource, and offer guidance on their role, siting and design. In all, 46 trails were analysed. Some of the main conclusions are summarised here, but the survey requires study in detail.

The impact of trails is not large, but is cumulative. One of the reasons for lack of impact is insufficient consideration of the role of the trail and the needs of distinct types of trail user. The self-guided trail will continue to be useful because there is no other method which provides the same kind of recreational experience. Trails should consider three main factors: the context, the objectives and the users. Leaflets are suitable for committed users, while uncommitted users are better served by panels. These techniques can be complemented by others such as AV displays. If trails are to serve the fuller role they are capable of, they need to be better managed and maintained. This includes publicity, physical maintenance and leaflet restocking. There are additional conclusions relating to the different categories of trail identified above.

Ruth Tillyard

AN END TO A TRAIL OF TEARS?

Terry Stevens reports on the Navajos

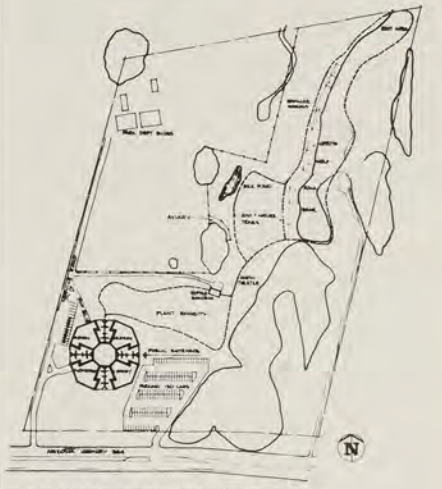
After more than a century of supression and discrimination, exploitation and neglect, enforced servility and resultant anger, the native Indian tribes of North America are beginning, through a process of self-determination, to regain their lost pride. The tribes have realised however that if this self-determination is to become a reality it must be underwritten by the healthy development of the groups' economy.

Perhaps today, as never before, the Indian reservation, culture, and heritage are being subjected to considerable interest from other Americans, making them significant visitor attractions. In response to these tourist demands, aided by the American public's propensity for travel, and given impetus by impatience at the development of tribal economies generally, many Indian groups are realising the potentials of tourism to upgrade their social and economic conditions - an end to 'their trail of tears'.

Tribes have responded in a variety of ways positively to greet visitors providing them with overnight accommodation, and an opportunity to learn more about the Indians' cultural, social and environmental heritage whilst enjoying the diverse recreational benefits of many reservations. The degree of commitment to tourism varies between tribes, being dependant upon the strength, independence and awareness of the individual tribe. It is the largest group of native Americans - the 140,000 strong Navajo tribe - which offers one of the best examples of this developing Indian involvement in tourism, and as a corollary, interpretation.

THE NAVAJOS

Over the past fifteen years, day visitors and overnight tourist numbers to the 2,500 sq mile reservation, straddling the states of Utah, Arizona and New Mexico (one of the few reservations to incorporate some of a tribe's traditional lands) have increased dramatically. The Navajo Tribal Council has responded emphatically, by strictly controlling whilst, at the same time encouraging and marketing, appropriate planned facilities.



SITE PLAN OF BUILDING, ZOO, NATURE TRAILS
At right are spectacular Navajo Sandstone cliffs in a natural setting.

Central to their operations has been the marketing, grant-aided by the Indian Travel Commission, of the natural resources found on the reservation, particularly the superlative weathered formations of Monument Valley, Canyon de Chelly and the Mesa Verde. In striking contrast to this arid scenery of the high plains are the flowing streams and coniferous forests of the Chuska Mountains, which in turn give way to the expansive water areas of Lake Powell and Glen Canyon. The predictably mild, dry climate (less than 25" per annum) ensures popularity. Imposed upon this impressive natural environment is the colourful and imaginative traditional craftsmanship, producing jewellery, weavings and painting, currently receiving universal acclaim. The proximity of the Phoenix-Tuscon metropolitan areas, now the major growth area of America, together with world famous off-reservation attractions, such as Grand Canyon,

assist the tourist potential of Navajoland.

WINDOW ROCK

The development of opportunities to assist the enjoyment of these resources illustrates again considerable diversity: small scale yet widespread picnic sites and roadside rest areas; a series of Tribal Parks; four large well equipped camp grounds and over 5,000 acres of recreational lakes. More recently however, several more ambitious extravagant projects have been commissioned. The two major ones being located at the traditional Headquarters of the Navajo Tribe, Window Rock, situated 30 miles north of Gallup, New Mexico.

Window Rock has been developed as the tribal centre since the tribe's 'long walk' from Fort Sumner, following their surrender to Kit Carson's troops in 1868. Today this service centre is the focus of Administration; the Navajo Times newspaper; the Arts and Crafts Guild, a large supermarket; several banks, and the Navajo Nation's tribal fairground. Inevitably such a concentration of services has turned the small town into a continuous scene of community activity, a suitable location for the building of the only motel on the reservation. The Navajo Motor Inn is an impressive new building with high quality, well equipped rooms, spacious restaurant and welcome swimming pool.

BIRD'S EYE VIEW OF HERITAGE CENTER BUILDING

A NEW CENTRE

However, it is the Navajo Heritage Centre which is by far the most exciting and certainly the most expensive project ever entered into by the Navajos. The scheme envisages a multi-purpose area designed primarily to function as a community cultural centre aiming to give tribe members, particularly children, a focal point for cultural activities. The Centre will interpret the Navajo's history from their emergence to the present day, involving experiences to invoke all the senses, relying not just on the spoken and written word. Inevitably the new Heritage Centre, as with any such complex, is certain to become a large scale visitor centre and attraction.

The focal point of this $5 million complex will be a building, the design of which is based upon the 'Place of Emergence' symbol. It will consist of a central rotunda furnished as a traditional hogan. The four wings emanating from this rotunda will eventually house a museum, auditorium and convention centre, library and administrative offices respectively. Research laboratories and storage space will be available in the basements.

The centre is being built in the Tribal Park adjacent to the Motel. It is the parkland around the building site which is being developed during Stage 1 - the creation of a park and zoo complete with nature trails, wildlife preserve and open air amphitheatre.

Emphasis throughout the scheme is placed upon Navajo involvement from the fund raising to all stages of construction. Indeed employment of Navajos, particularly in this labour intensive initial stage, is a fundamental objective. Ironically, however, the Tribal Council have commissioned non-Indian consultants to undertake the design of the Heritage Centre Scheme, a policy which led to much initial criticism and apprehension.

This appears to have been well founded, for it has taken the appointed consultants a long time to acquire even a basic understanding of the tribal culture and heritage. Many Navajos question outside involvement at all.

COSTS AS WELL AS BENEFITS

Around the popular gathering grounds of Windsor Rock, the opulence associated with tourism is becoming increasingly obvious. Benefits associated with tourist developments are to be found: employment; investment in infrastructures; increased wages and of course an induced multiplier effect. Tourism however is not proving to be the purveyor of all good. Contemporary to providing opportunities for the development of the cultural base, tourism also increases the pressures upon the indigenous culture, introducing new values and ostentatious tastes. Indeed commitments to tourism has led to the alienation of land and labour from more traditional deployment.

Tourism is regarded as part of the fight for freedom yet ironically in many ways Indians are becoming more dependent upon the white man. For it is non-Indian demands which are shaping the design, standards and environment associated with tourist facilities. Commercialisation is resented by many tribesmen and often animosity expresses itself in activism. Arguably, mid-19 century coercion has been replaced by the 1970 attractions of the dollar. The net result of these could be very similar, unless controlled, planned tourist growth aiming at retaining and utilising income to the full is practised. To this end several government agencies offer advice and assistance, notably the National Park Service and the Indian Travel Commission. It remains an anomaly however to find whites teaching Indians how to manage a camp ground.

The Author gratefully acknowledges the assistance provided by the Winston Churchill Memorial Trust and its Board of Trustees in making the Study Tour of America possible.

Progress in Notts

THE INTERPRETIVE PLAN

While the Strategy document itself is now in the hands of the designers and printers, the Project has moved into a 'second stage'. Due to end in September 1978, the Countryside Commission agreed to a year's extension, enabling the Project Officer to concentrate on two of the other aims of the project, which are to stimulate interpretive provision and encourage co-ordination.

A great potential for the first lies with voluntary groups and other small organisations of which there are around 200 in Nottinghamshire (excluding Parish Councils). They often have very detailed knowledge about their own area of interest, and the county could be much more widely interpreted if this knowledge and interest were put over. Many groups had already become aware of the project, but they and the parish councils have all been informed of a small grants scheme, and that the Project Officer is available to offer (or find!) whatever help and advice they need in relation to interpretation.

So far the response in terms of formal applications has been low, but the scheme has not been promoted apart from the initial letter because (for budgetary reasons) no money can be paid until next April. However, there have been dozens of enquiries and the Project Officer has attended numerous meetings at which interpretation or a particular project has been discussed. She has also given advice, for instance, illustrating various ways a short audio-visual presentation can be carried out. Other help has included co-ordination of various organisations involved in one project, background research for use on another and evening talks to parish councils. In another case, by pressure on another organisation to accept a loan and one parish council to provide financial support, the Project Officer has enabled the production of a village guidebook which might not have materialised otherwise.

It is too early to assess the success or otherwise of this scheme of encouragement and grants, but even now it does show that there is a great deal of interest in Nottinghamshire and some of the potential is being realised, to the benefit of residents and visitors. In addition, it is showing that the mere possibility of small amounts of money is an incentive to activity.

Ruth Tillyard

Interpretation on the Dorset Coast

As part of the Dorset Heritage Coast Project, an Interpretation Unit was set up in March 1977. During initial consultations with farmers, landowners, parish councils and others in the Heritage Coast area, the hope was expressed that through interpretation the many visitors to the area would become better informed and treat the area with greater respect. Since the predominant activity in the area, apart from tourism, is farming, it was agreed that agricultural requirements would be one of the interpretive themes.

Through a concerted programme of interpretation using various low-cost media, it was hoped to reduce the discord between local communities and the massive number of tourists who visit the Dorset coast every summer.

The Interpretation Unit, using Job Creation Scheme labour, has carried out a carefully planned programme of interpretation consisting of outdoor displays, exhibitions, leaflets and programmes of guided walks. The aim was to cover as wide an area as possible with the minimum possible intrusion on the landscape.

During the planning stage, the need to provide for a wide variety of interests and to avoid repetition at different sites was taken into account. It was felt that undue emphasis on one type of subject such as natural history had been a fault of interpretation schemes in some areas.

ENCAPSULATED IN RESIN

Outdoor displays, a major feature of the project, have the advantage that they can be sited at the places people visit, near the features to be interpreted. Local history, archaeology, geology, the coastguard service, agriculture and a range of other subjects were treated at the sites which were thought to be most appropriate for the subject concerned. Most of the signs include a footpath map and an information panel accompanied by an individually prepared painting or line drawing, encapsulated in resin. Requests to respect agricultural requirements and wildlife have been included. So far the displays have proved to be weather-proof and more or less vandal-proof. Grant aid was given by the English and Southern Tourist Boards to pay for materials and manufacturing costs of the signs.

Most of the displays are to be sited in car parks which serve the footpaths on the Purbeck Heritage Coast, a hundred miles of which were signed and waymarked comprehensively some two years ago. Other situations include a village green the meeting points of several paths, laybys at viewpoints, and a boat park. The siting and content of the signs have always been agreed in discussion with the landowner/farmer or parish council concerned. Local suggestions on subject matter and presentation have proved very useful.

Exhibitions prepared during the project have included travelling displays explaining the Heritage Coast Project and a photographic display on the Dorset Underwater Survey, which forms part of the project. These are now in circulation to museums and libraries in Dorset and other interested bodies.

DUAL USE OF THE AREA

The Interpretation Unit has also worked with the army on an exhibition in the coastal Lulworth Ranges. A disused church has been repaired by the army as an Information Centre for people visiting the ranges which are now open at weekends and during school holidays. The theme of the exhibition is the natural and social history of the area, starting with the formation of the rocks 160 million years ago, and ending with the present dual use of the area for military training and for recreation.

Materials for the displays were supplied by the army and the content of the exhibition was worked out in conjunction with the Dorset Natural History and Archaeological Society and the Nature Conservancy Council.

Two series of guided walks were held during the summers of 1977 and 1978, using local volunteer experts as guides. A small charge was made for the walks which went directly to the guide to cover expenses. There was no cost to the local authority administering the project and no complicated cash handling arrangements were necessary. Boat trips were included in the programme and these were related to the outstanding geology of the area.

The Interpretation Unit has an office in an eighteenth century Town House in Dorchester which is owned by Dorset County Council. This building also houses the Dorset Underwater Survey marine biologists who are carrying out a detailed survey of the underwater life of the Heritage Coast. In addition, the outhouses of the building are used for storage of timber and tools for the practical conservation team who are responsible for putting up the interpretive signs. All the staff come under the Dorset Heritage Coast Officer in the County Council's Planning Department.

The Interpretation Unit consists of graphic designer Peter Hyde, artist Lyn Avery and scriptwriter/research assistant Diana Shipp. Plans are currently underway to extend the programme to the whole of the rural coast of Dorset. The scheme comes to an end in December 1978.

Roland Tarr

TAKE NOTE!

NEW LEICESTER COURSES

The University of Leicester's Department of Museum Studies has recently introduced, on an experimental basis, new phased courses intended for museum staff who are unable to take a full year away from their posts. Full details from the Department at 152 Upper New Walk, Leicester LE1 7QU.

INTERPRETING EDINBURGH

It was good to note that 'The Scotsman' in August referred to the newsletter and the Society's 'surprise and disappointment' at the lack of a centre for an exposition of Edinburgh. Martin Orrom has been involved in discussions on the proposed use of the Tron Kirk as an interpretive centre.

AONB STUDY

The Countryside Commission want to find out people's views on 'areas of outstanding natural beauty'. A comprehensive study is being undertaken by K S Himsworth, which will last two years. At the same time the Commission have published a discussion paper (CCP 116) available free, arranged a conference and invited comments by 31 March 1979.

GLADSTONE MUSEUM

In case you did not know, David Sekers has left for Styal Mill, Cheshire. He is succeeded by Dr Francis Celoria, a ceramic historian and archaeologist from the Adult Education Department at nearby Keele University. The museum has just won a Times/RICS Conservation Award; it took first prize in the section for buildings converted to museums.

CLASSIFICATION PROBLEMS SEMINAR

The Group for Regional Studies in Museums is holding a one-day seminar in Birmingham on Friday, 24 November, to consider the problems of classification and standards of terminology in social history, regional ethnology etc. Further details from Richard Langhome, Lancashire Museum, Stanley Street, Preston, PR1 47P.

WATERWAYS WILDLIFE CALENDAR

Wildlife is the theme of the British Waterways 1979 calendar which is available from British Waterways Board, Melbury House, Melbury Terrace, London, NW1 6JX. Price £2.25 + 44p postage

COUNTRY CODE REVIEW

A Study Group has been established 'to review the Country Code and its promotion as a means of improving the behaviour of visitors to the countryside'. It will make recommendations to the Countryside Commission, which, as the

organisation legally required to devise the code, has set up the group.

THE BIRDS OF ST MARY'S?

Arthur Watson has sent full details of the activities of the Passmore Edwards Museum in East London and hopes members may visit the collection at the time of the London meeting. The Museum is responsible for an unusual nature reserve - the nine acres of the St Mary Magdalene Churchyard.

LAKELAND PROGRESS

M E Burkett, Director of Kendal's Abbot Hall Museum of Lakeland Life has sent us her progress report. Much conservation work has been done and considerable re-arrangement of exhibits. A planned display is that of centralising excavated archaelogical artefacts from what was Westmorland.

NEW WAY

Opened on 21 October was the longest recreation footpath to be created with the Commission's help. The Calderdale Way is a circular walk around and to the west of Halifax, devised by local civic societies and amenity groups and established with local authority support.

CC BACKS OS

The Countryside Commission has stated that OS maps increase a visitor's enjoyment and understanding of the countryside, help to reduce conflict between landowner and visitor, and people are less likely to become lost or endangered. In evidence submitted to the Ordnance Survey Review Committee, the Commission says that the educational value should be emphasised and suggests that the OS develop teaching packs or courses in map reading to increase people's knowledge and pleasure in the countryside.

'ECOLOGY' AT THE BM

The second phase of the British Museum's exhibition opened on 25 October. It aims to promote a deeper understanding of natural history. The interdependence of species within ecosystems is illustrated by settings of English oak woodlands and rocky seashores. The displays include opportunities for visitor involvement such as a computer-controlled display to investigate a genuine ecological problem. The Museum and Cambridge University Press are jointly publishing a book entitled 'Nature at work - introducing ecology'.

PEMBROKESHIRE SEASON EXTENDED

The Pembrokeshire Coast National Park has continued its walks and talks programme into the autumn and winter as a result of many requests. New bus tours are added.

THINGS WORTH HAVING

Sir Frank Price, Chairman of the British Waterways Board, spoke on November 13 to the Public Works Congress in Birmingham on 'The Place of Canals in present-day Society'. They offer, he said, 'a civilised means of transporting goods, a means to enjoy informal recreation in the open air, an attractive feature of the landscape and townscape. In the closing decades of the 20th century, these things are worth having.'

INTERPRETATION OF OLD PORTSMOUTH

The preliminary report prepared by DART referred to in the Spring 1978 Newsletter has been approved. The Southern Tourist Board have arranged substantial financial support and have become joint sponsors of the project with Portsmouth City Council.

Under Michael Dower's personal direction, the project gets underway in earnest very soon, but during the Summer months, a series of visitor surveys was carried out. A Steering Group has been established to supervise the project.

SUSSEX MUSEUMS

To encourage people to visit and enjoy their local museums, East Sussex County Planning Department has published a guide entitled 'Exploring Museums in Sussex'. Each of the county's 52 museums is described, and details of opening times, charges, car parking and refreshments available are given.

Note: We should like to report your news too. Keep us posted!

what's on ~ coming events

COURSES

COUNTRYSIDE COMMISSION COURSES

1) 26 Jan - 4 Feb, Countryside Interpretation Training Course: Basic training and education in the essential principles and practice of interpretation in the countryside for rangers and junior information and interpretation staff practically engaged in this field of work. £80

2) 12 - 16 Feb, Countryside Management and Recreation: A course for professional managers, planners, land agents, leisure and recreation officers, head rangers. The course is designed to reflect contemporary theory and practice in the planning and management of countryside recreation and landscape conservation. £65

Further details of both (including CC subsidies) from: The Principal, Losehill Hall, Castleton, Derbyshire, S30 2WB.

DANYWENALLT COURSES

2 - 6 Jan, Winter Walks. £25.
26 - 28 Jan, Winter Water Birds. £14.
2 - 4 Mar, Map and Compass in the Beacons. £14.
23 - 25 Mar, Industrial Archaeology. £14.

Further details of all four (provisional) courses at Danywenallt Study Centre from Roger Stevens, Glamorgan Street, Brecon, Powys LD3 7DP.

LEARNING FROM MONUMENTS

2 - 7 Apr, Educational Use of Museums, Ancient Monuments and Historic Houses: designed to promote an exchange of ideas and experience for those interested in this work. Churchill Hall, University of Bristol. Full details and forms for admission from DES, Elizabeth House, York Road, London SE1 7PH.

CONFERENCES

BURTON NOW

The next meeting of the Society will be held in Burton and all members have been sent details. It promises to be more Ale than Arty.

DURHAM LATER

Next Spring, the AGM will be held as part of the Society's first meeting in the North East, probably in Durham. Members will be sent full information in good time.

FLYING HIGH

USA - HERE WE COME

In response to a number of requests, the Society is proposing to organise a trip to the Eastern USA in May/June 1980, at a cost of no more than £250 per head and subject to sufficient demand.

The purpose is to study interpretive provisions in company with interpretive planners/designers over there. If you are interested, please write to Martin Orrom, 9 Greenhill Gardens, Edinburgh EH10 4BN. There is no commitment at this stage and Martin would welcome comments on whom we might contact and where we should visit.

DIRECTORY

SOUND MOVE

Eirion Lewis is leaving the Wales Tourist Board to join the IBA as their officer for Wales and the West of England. Starting in January, he will be based in Cardiff and looks forward to the Society - and its members - seeking opportunities to develop links particularly with local radio.