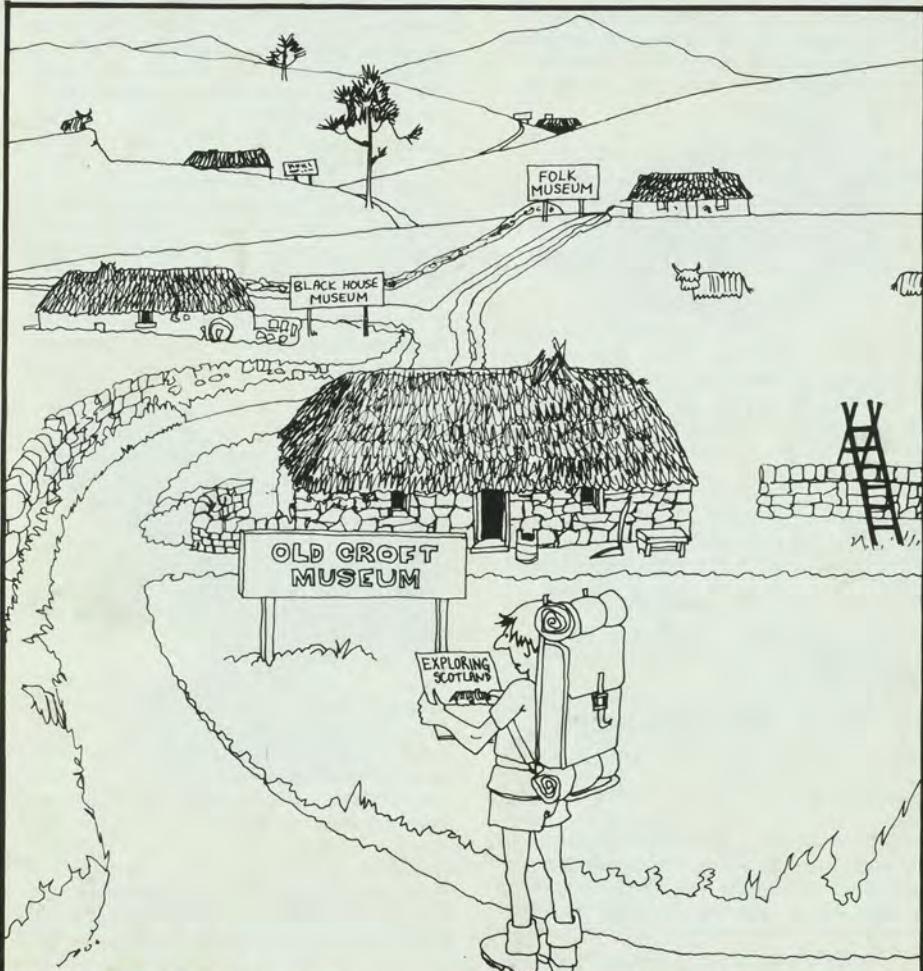


# interpretation

number 13

summer 1979



illustrates the need for an Interpretive Strategy for the Highlands and Islands

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## 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

President: The Right Hon. The Countess of Albemarle, DBE, D Litt, DCL, LLD  
Chairman: J Geraint Jenkins, MA, FSA, FMA (Welsh Folk Museum)

Vice-Chairman: Peter Moore (Cheshire County Council)

Secretary: Martin Orrom, TD, MA  
(9 Greenhill Gardens, Edinburgh  
EH10 4BN. Bus.Tel. 031-334 0303)

Treasurer: Terry Stevens (Dyfed County Council)

Publicity Officer: Graham Taylor  
(Countryside Commission)

Editor: Ruth Tillyard (Nottinghamshire County Council)

## The Newsletter

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## Interpretation

### EDITOR'S NOTE

The previous editor has set a high standard. It is an honour to take over from him; we all owe him much gratitude. To maintain the standard, rather than to change the format is the aim, since that appears to be the desire of the readers, judging from the results of the questionnaire. The newsletter exists to please its readers, not its editor; suggestions for improvements are always welcome.

The retiring editor mentioned that there would be "more planning" of articles and features. This will happen gradually; for instance, it is hoped to include a feature on Conwy in the next issue. It would be a pleasure to print contributions from readers, particularly letters, reactions to places visited, or thoughts on 'the state of the art.'

I feel that it is the role of an editor to report, and not to judge, this privilege being kept for contributors. As far as possible, my own opinions will be kept out of the newsletter. Another dilemma is how to report activities of one's own organisation. The way to deal with this is to 'commission' others to do this, and to apply the editorial pen as little and as honestly as possible.

It has been decided for a number of reasons (not least the G.P.O.!) to use local printers which, together with some new headings, will probably result in a slightly different 'feel' to the newsletter. Let us hope that the quality remains high.

Typing by Cecilia Render and Debbie Simpson and pasting-up by Friedel Plant, Nottinghamshire County Council.

Printed by Progressive Printers, Ayr Street, Nottingham.

## CONFERENCE PREVIEW

### SHROPSHIRE - A BORDER COUNTY

Shropshire is administratively, scenically and culturally a border county. Its 1300 square miles sit emphatically astride the boundary between upland and lowland Britain which has its origins in the geological division between harder pre-Carboniferous rocks and softer post-Carboniferous ones. A kink in that boundary puts lowland Shropshire in the north of the county and upland Shropshire in the south, with the River Severn forming an approximate but largely co-incidental boundary between the two. The underlying rocks have not only determined the shape of the landscape but also strongly influenced the ways in which man has exploited it for agriculture and its mineral wealth.



Because it is a border the region is atypical; hybridisation of history and culture, landscape and wildlife results in complexity, and neglect by those who seek stereotypes. Holidaymakers pass through Shropshire on their way to the more spacious grandeur of the Welsh National Parks or in search of its only missing scenic attribute, the sea. Academics turn to areas where their problems can be studied on a larger scale, be it limestone flora or patterns of settlement.

Nowhere is this lack of definable quality better illustrated than in the Shropshire Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Not that I would have any wish to dispute its designation; but unlike other AsONB of comparable area, such as the Cotswolds, Chilterns or Sussex Downs, it lacks any single unifying feature beyond upland rural tranquility. Again geology is to blame, for the eastward bulge of ancient rocks which underlie south Shropshire represents a unique range of age and type in so small an area. The result is an



intimate and small scale landscape, ideal for walking rather than mountaineering and harbouring such gems of our architectural heritage as Stokesay Castle or Ludlow; places which by virtue of their smallness the author personally finds more meaningful than the Chatsworths and Yorks of this world which tend to induce historical indigestion.

We have, therefore, something of a connoisseurs county, preserved from the worst excesses of tourist pressure by absence of the obviously spectacular, yet resulting in possibly dangerous official inertia and a laissez faire approach to planning and provision of facilities on the grounds of lack of need and demand. Visitors don't come to Shropshire for the bright lights and candyfloss; they come to escape from the pressures and routine of urban life, to unwind and find rural pleasures

"In valleys of springs and rivers,  
By Onny and Teme and Clun,  
The country for easy livers,  
The quietest under the sun"

as A E Housman expressed it.

## Conference Preview

And they find it because the predominant industry in Shropshire is still, as it always has been, agriculture. It may not be the agriculture of our forebears (although there are many parts of the county where times change slowly), as enshrined in the activities of the Action Scott working farm museum; but however much assistance the modern farmer might get from advanced technology, nature provides the ultimate constraints. And in endowing the county with such geological diversity Nature has ensured that much of its essentially rural character will be retained.

The county's rocks were also the roots of the county's manufacturing industry. Visitors come now as they did two hundred years ago to marvel at what has been described with equal hyperbole by Hulber in 1837 as "the most extraordinary district in the world" and by the Telford Development Corporation as the "birthplace of industry". Yet even the Ironbridge Gorge for all the greatness of its achievements in the eighteenth century iron trade and nineteenth century clay industries preserves a feeling of small scale and almost rural intimacy. This curious amalgam depicted by such artists as William Williams and described by Arthur

Young in 1776 as '... a winding glen between two immense hills which break into various forms, and all thickly covered with wood ... too beautiful to be much in unison with that variety of horrors art has spread at the bottom ...' is still largely preserved today. Because when it came to industrial development Shropshire found itself again a 'border' county. It was on the edge of the midlands coalfields, on the edge of the region over which an efficient network of communications could be constructed, and by the end of the nineteenth century instead of wooded hillsides being plastered with rows of back-to-back dwellings of an industrial conurbation its iron trade had dwindled away at the expense of the Black Country to the east. As Telford struggles to revive the industrial importance of East Shropshire one gets an uneasy feeling of *deja vu*. The first canals of the area were amongst the earliest in the country but not until the twilight of the canal era was East Shropshire connected to the rest of the inland waterway network by the engineer whose name is embodied in the New Town. Is the M54 Wellington by-pass to remain unconnected to the rest of the country's motorways until the day the oil runs out? Such might seem a rather detailed question upon which to pin a general summary of the county, yet it is characteristic of the ambivalence of attitude which pervades Salopian thought and action, perhaps symptomatic of the fact that we sit on a fence, created by Nature, demarcated by Offa, consolidated by the Marcher Lordships and now trying to resist the pernicious levelling of twentieth century uniformity.

Andrew Jenkinson



## DURHAM CONFERENCE

### VISITS

In Sunderland we were addressed by the Director of Tyne and Wear Museums, one of only three County Services in a Metropolitan County. Its activities include running ten museums, giving a large amount of grant aid to other organisations, improving the environment, interpretation and originating major exhibitions. We were given a guided tour of Sunderland Docks, a fascinating study of change in technology and land-use. We stopped briefly at the Monkwearmouth Station Museum, where the booking office has been restored to its Edwardian splendour and there is an interesting collection of rolling stock and engines. The line through the station is still in use. The museum service uses a huge engine shed on the further side as storage space, a very useful resource with considerable potential. We also visited Ryhope Engines Museum, a water pumping station with a small display area at the rear. And of course, we went to Beamish where we sampled most of the attractions including the farm, colliery, tram and train ride, old miners' cottages and the audio-visual show and exhibition.

### TALKS

#### STAFFORD LINSLEY - INTERPRETING THE INDUSTRIAL HERITAGE

He briefly described some of the potential areas for interpretation and through it, preservation of the industrial heritage of the North East. Interpretation, he said, was a "magic word" in the same way as "unique" or "significant", a type of word that impresses and helps achieve desired aims. His main point was that Industrial Archaeology should not just be interpreted in its technological context, but should have a "people" element.

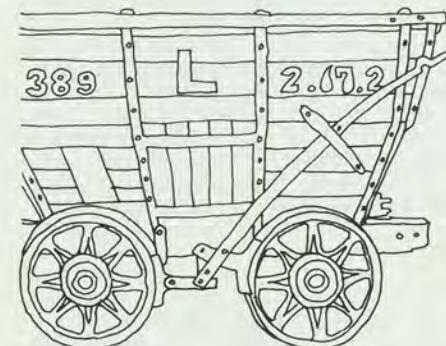
### BRIAN ROBERTS - LANDSCAPE WITH FIGURES

Brian Roberts' concern was for the countryside which he saw as a lifeboat rather than a peripheral source of support. Given all the pressures - including those of education - he feared for its future.

In a talk scattered with quotable quotes, his theme was three questions which had been asked through time. The first, for the individual to answer, concerned the idea of a "designed earth" - Is the earth a purposefully made creation? The second concerned environmental influence - Has the earth's climate, geography, etc. moulded human culture? Thirdly, looking at man as a geographic agent, he highlighted a basic conflict - How has man changed the landscape?

He provided a fascinating range of examples to show, principally, answers to the third question. The evidence of man's influence was everywhere, sometimes obviously, other times only through careful analysis of, e.g., soil samples.

In interpreting landscape, he said, one could not ignore the past, but there were often indications, too, for the future. Using the countryside as a teaching resource brought its own pressures, and he was aware of the possible damage his own investigative activities could do, despite one student's belief that 'fieldwork nourishes the geographic imagination'.



## Durham Conference

FRANK ATKINSON - BEAMISH

Using its name as a acronym, Frank Atkinson declared that the secret of Beamish was that it provided Better Environmental Awareness through a Museum for Interpretation to Social History. Beamish was a concept, he said, not a museum, really. It was not didactic, nor for the specialist. It was concerned with ideas, it combined folk and industrial museums but not to show that the old days were 'good' or 'bad' but simply that 'those were the days - draw your own conclusions.'

Beamish, he said, attempted to stimulate local and regional pride - it was something worthwhile in an impoverished landscape. It was important, too, to highlight regional variations, whether they be farm buildings such as an engine house for threshing (the gin gang), industrial relics like horizontal chimneys, or most important dialect.

Despite criticisms on its siting, its 'rebuild on site' policy, its showmanship, Atkinson remained unbowed. Beamish brought understanding through enjoyment to half a million visitors a year - 'and that can't be bad'. They were helping the movement of educating to preserve, which could be done best if there were something to show - at Beamish, if nowhere else.

ARTHUR BLENKINSOP - NATIONAL HERITAGE DO WE WANT MORE LEGISLATION?

'No one form of legislation could cover the whole range of connotations which heritage held. For it included, Arthur Blenkinsop said, Language, place names, countryside, landscape, castles and other buildings, art treasures and



many more.

As the pattern of life, he said, is one of development and change, any stifling of this will stultify society. Yet conservation in some areas was essential.

Articulating a range of legislation and the multiplicity of organisations with interests in, or responsibilities for heritage Blenkinsop was concerned that there should be a National Heritage Fund. There was a need to be able to pass tangible assets to appropriate bodies without their being realised, despite the Treasury's constant desire to see 'cash' as a main consideration.

He saw the problem overall, however, as not a need for new legislation but the better use of what was there. On the other hand, on what could have been a political point (he had just retired from Parliament) he was convinced that, as land was our most scarce resource, limitations should be placed on the rights of individuals to arrogate the use of large tracts.

It is unlikely that the new government will take steps in that direction!

## AGM

### ELECTION OF OFFICERS

The Officers were re-elected with the exception of Michael Glen, who stood down as editor and was replaced by Ruth Tillyard. An additional committee member post remained unfilled.

### OFFICERS' REPORTS

The retiring editor thanked all those who had contributed to the Newsletter. The treasurer reported that subscriptions would need to be raised next year. The secretary said that the November meeting would take the form of a seminar in London, with the Norfolk visit being postponed to next Spring. The proposed American tour is described elsewhere in the Newsletter.

## GOING TO TOWN

### GOING TO TOWN IN THE 1980s: TOWARDS A MORE HUMAN EXPERIENCE OF COMMERCIAL SPACE

Brian Goodey

Although the 1970s may well be seen, in retrospect, as the decade when Britain became aware of its permanent state of economic hardship, our environment reflects more gains than losses. Although now admittedly past its peak, the last decade saw a considerable growth of professional and lay interest in matters environmental, and whilst there remain few 'environmental correspondents' on national papers, their legacy remains in the issues which both press and television choose to examine. Stereotyped inquiries and responses seem to prevail, but there can be no question that public interest in environmental issues has increased vastly in the past ten years. No doubt some future historian will be able to superimpose a coherent pattern upon the initiatives, programmes and policies of the decade's superministry the Department of the Environment. But elements of that pattern are already clear; namely, that the Department has done rather better on broader issues of environmental quality than it has done on specific programme areas such as housing and road-building.

In terms of public policy, Britain is likely to enter the 1980s with its major environmentally-related problem - that of deprivation and inequality of opportunity in inner city areas - aggravated rather than ameliorated by the events of the 1970s. But the inner city, the intermediate zone, is only one of three distinct sections of Britain's towns and cities.

### EXPERIENCES OF THE URBAN ENVIRONMENT

For the majority in most British towns and cities, the urban experience has become at least three environmental experiences. The suburban living environment offers a pleasant context

in which to live, possibly to work, and to service many daily needs.

The intermediate zone offers the second, contrasting, urban experience. On the journey from peripheral residence to town centre this is often shielded from view by the strip facade, an increasingly useful array of warehouse outlets, auto facilities and modest, transitory shops which serve to protect the mobile from a view of the embattled.

So to the commercial core of the town or city - focus of public and private investment and symbolic of the enterprise of the urban place. Many would suggest (the present writer amongst them) that the commercial core should also reflect the uniqueness of a particular town or city. If this were the case, if British urban places strove to 'be themselves' then it would be very difficult to make generalisations concerning the ensemble. But this has not been the case in recent years and whereas there are differences in commercial facades, traffic patterns, landmarks and streetscapes which clearly identify each town centre, there are an increasing number of similarities. In most cases neither the shopping centre nor its parking facilities add much to the traditional British townscape. Townscape is best experienced in the equally ubiquitous pedestrian schemes where, again, national chains line paved ways littered with standard furniture.

### URBAN DESIGN IN THE 1980s

In each of the urban zones outlined above, there is a range of opportunities for environmental change in the 1980s, and the foundations upon which trends can be developed are evident today. In each context positive developments must be derived from the user's experience of and evident (or latent) interest in the area.

Looking to the future, and thus returning to the beginning of this essay, it is important to consider the next decade in terms of opportunities for change rather than

## Going to town

as a time continuum in which to apply variations of existing solutions. The day may well come when workshop communities, like pedestrian schemes, have become so stylised and commonplace that their utility as an innovation in the urban fabric will have declined, and whilst we might rely on native professional wit and a gap to be filled to provide the answer, I am convinced that an occasional stock-taking of opportunities rather than of solutions is required. Accordingly the reader of this essay is directed to a brief discussion of some aspects of the commercial core which will require attention in the 1980s and which are all evident today. Each suggests both a problem and an opportunity for creative urban design.

### TOWARDS A MORE HUMAN EXPERIENCE OF COMMERCIAL SPACE

Working through all available agencies, and increasingly with commercial rather than local authority interests, the urban designer has the opportunity to act in a number of contexts in order to provide town users with a broader experience of urban place. The town centre user in Britain has become the embattled, unfeeling client of commercial interests, a shopper to be drawn as quickly as possible to the point of sale and to be propelled, less rapidly, homewards. 'Going to town' was once a multidimensional experience; it remains so in many European cities and is becoming so in the USA where revitalisation schemes have to fight for their share of the market. It can become so in Britain again, so what are the areas for concern for the Interpreter.

#### 1. BARE BACKSIDES

After the bus has meandered to the town centre the passenger is at least greeted by facades which suggest arrival at 'a place', but this is seldom the case for the private motorist. Characteristically parking is to be found to the rear of a pedestrianised street, in which case the

bare backside is old, allowing the architectural historian an insight into urban evolution, but giving little evidence of civic pride or well-being to the lay visitor. New shopping centres offer a barren prospect, with either brick cliffs sheltering waste skips, or a purpose-built labyrinth of levels, lifts and corridors which don't quite link the shopping facilities to the parking which is intended to serve them.

To do better in the traditional backside parking lots, more consideration needs to be given to both the retail potential and design of rear areas. Possibilities include more rear entry into shops, the addition of small retail units in the parking area, modest rehabilitation of rear service areas, appropriate planting and the recognition that a parking lot is a pedestrian, as well as a traffic system.

#### 2. PEDESTRIAN PEDESTRIANISATION

If it were not for the people, many pedestrian areas would be (and are) very boring. Pedestrianisation in Britain seems to be regarded as a tool of traffic management and retail opportunity rather than as an opportunity to enliven public space. Although pedestrian schemes are welcomed by users, local authorities often fail to capitalise on the opportunity which they create. Although some of these openings are in the area of design - as for example, in displaying not the standard set of advertising boards but enclosed moving machines (as at Bolton), salvaged elements of built form or interpretive information on the immediate area - it is in the area of human activity where the possibilities are greatest. Again it is a matter of local management, but having seen buskers gathering large smiling crowds in Stuttgart, Paris, Strasbourg and Boston on cold November evenings, why is it that the biggest attraction I've seen in a British city mall is an army recruiting display? The pedestrianised area is a public place where the street life which has been forced underground or vanished completely could be revived. Street activity no longer 'just happens' and the designer has to provide the incentive and leverage to complete the redesign.

## Going to town

#### 3. PLACES TO SIT AND STARE

Although seating and resting places are totally inadequate in most pedestrian schemes, there is a strong case for suggesting that these are indeed not the most appropriate locations for rest and reflection. The pedestrian street, though not the plaza or square is essentially a place of movement and bustle. What is too often absent from the commercial core is the opportunity to rest and take stock of one's situation. Town centres are, therefore, littered with tired, wilting people, the old leaning or stooping, the young straining to run free for a few moments.

The argument that central area space is too valuable to be devoted to casual seating might be valid if it were not for the large expanses of grassed slope or paved forecourt that punctuate the townscape. The current neglect of central area parks and resting places and the failure to develop appropriate new areas for fear of their being used by alcoholics and drifters seems akin to ceasing the manufacture of beds in the hope of reducing the birth rate.

#### 4. FOOTPATH EXPERIENCES

As commercial facilities become concentrated on smaller sites, less of the town or city is known to the majority of users. Tributary streets once heavily used by pedestrians for the small, local shops which they offered, become dominated by traffic and the average citizen's perambulation offers a narrow range of environmental and human experiences. But to know one's town is a prerequisite for concern; to be able to comment, participate or seize opportunity one must be able to recall an outline map of place. Search and discovery were, at one time, a major urban experience, especially for the young. Today, the opportunities remain but the public requires guidance and assistance in the process of re-

discovery; the brash modernity of the shopping focus falls off rapidly to the greyer areas beyond, and casual wanderings are not invited. This problem is more evident in larger towns where the pace of change has usually been slower, and although popular routes may have been disrupted or modified they may also have been enlarged or enhanced.

In areas of radical reconstruction, routes may have survived but adjacent walls on a larger scale can well render footpaths unattractive or unsafe. The question of safety raises once more the argument that footpaths are potential hazards for the user, but the answer must be in the penalties accorded offenders who commit crimes in such places and not in the care of neglected or downgraded facilities. A number of towns and cities have well established footpath networks, and in places such as Stoke-on-Trent the preparation of town trails has both enhanced the quality of the walkway and of the walking experience. The judicious use of wasteland in private hands as well as inaccessible public land can often open up paths which offer an attractive contrast to the bustle of the central area.

#### 5. TRANSPARENCY

Another aspect of urban places which the footpath walk can be made to reveal is the industrial and commercial activity which keeps the town alive. Until the 1960s geographies of Britain described towns in terms of their products and main manufactures, but now any traditional association between place and product seems confused by tertiary industry, warehousing, multinationals, closures and redundancies. Nobody is likely to ignore the major employer of thousands but except for the workforce, even the nationally-known enterprise is now likely to be hidden from view. Security, cuts in community relations activities and factory visits have all distanced industry from the resident and the visitor. In the cases of smaller employers and of craft-based industries, there is a similar distancing, often because of relocation

## Going to town

into obscurity. Whilst not necessarily cherishing a return to the days when small boys peered around doors to face the furnace fire of industry, there are sound reasons why a range of activities - both industrial and commercial - should be made more visible to the passing public. The journalistic stereotypes of industrial and commercial processes and worker - employer relations are recognised as damaging by all sides of industry, as are the popular slurs as to the durability of products. Outsiders should not have to wait until a process is vestigial and enshrined in a museum before there is a chance to observe or understand. In this area the urban designer has an innovative role to play in developing a programme which convinces the industrialist to sacrifice recently extended privacy and security in the cause of public relations and commercial advantage. The return of shop-window craft workshops to some European pedestrian schemes suggests the beginning of the process which might be taken up, with advantage, by some of the current workshop community experiments, experiments which are much better known to a national professional audience than to the localities in which they are situated. By making some of the economic life of a place transparent, the relationship between residence and work can be restated and the movement around town punctuated by ever-changing activities.

### 6. CHANGE AS AN EVENT

The urban designer, architect and planner have few avenues for formally presenting the results of their work to the public. Yet the building process itself is an event, or rather a series of events which can be made every bit as involving as the daily radio or TV serial. In the bombed-out London of the 1950s, each building site provided its own serial to lunchtime viewers - viewing platforms were provided, drawings and elevations were available, and at least one site

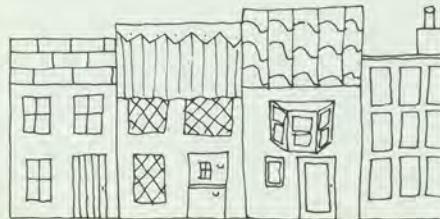
provided a telephone description of the state of work. For no good reason - though cost is often quoted - building sites have joined the defensible space conspiracy and are now surrounded by hoardings which tell as much about the security firm employed as the professional designers and builders involved.

In failing to interpret the process of change in towns and cities, the design professions and developers are neglecting a major opportunity for relating their work to the experiences of the host community, and the building process - aside from fires, accidents and demolition - is probably the most exciting event in the urban scene.

### OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE 1980s

'Going to town' was once a rich experience which regularly endorsed one's decision to reside in a place by offering novelty, tradition and a context to be shared with one's fellow citizens. In designing viable commercial centres this human dimension has been ignored. The next decade offers both the opportunity and the necessity for developing the sense of urban place.

Each opportunity above has already been taken somewhere and has proved effective. There has been no single catalyst for action; in some cases commercial expediency has generated new forms of street-life, in others change has been effected in the face of the law. But what all these opportunities require is the willingness and enthusiasm of the designer to extend his skills to embrace not only the polished vision of a more responsive urban context but also the abilities of the animator and fixer who can lead a range of interested parties to share such a vision.



## TATTON CRITIQUE

### TATTON PARK MEDIAEVAL VILLAGE TRAIL: CRITIQUE

Cheshire County Council's Countryside and Recreation Division have recently made available an appraisal of the one kilometre self-guided trail constructed as a result of one of the recommendations in the Tatton Park Interpretive Study, carried out by the United States National Park Service and published by the Countryside Commission in 1975.

In constructing the trail, wayside exhibit boards were used because of their value as markers of features not obvious to the untrained eye and because of the wider appeal that boards have to the more casual user who may lack the commitment to seek out the source of a printed guide. Great attention was paid to effective graphics and striking, concise text. There were never more than 200 words on any one board: even then, the texts were considered longer than necessary. Fifteen boards were used and this was considered the right number for the length of trail. Each was positioned on a sturdy wooden box-like structure so that the features being explained could be seen by the viewer simply raising the head. Measures were taken to combat erosion around the boards by having them moveable and by using panels of mesh pegged to the ground where visitors would stand to read the board.

The proportion of visitors to Tatton Park who used the trail was found to be 19%, a considerably higher figure than that for trails on recreation sites in general. There was also a high number of repeat visitors to the trail. In view of these figures and the fact that the trail seemed to stimulate questions on interpretive developments taking place at the nearby Tatton Old Hall, it is considered that the trail has been a success.

There were some slight problems with the construction of the boards themselves, which were made by encapsulating the graphics and script behind a clear polyester/plastic medium. In the extremely hot summer of 1976, the boards expanded and the replacement boards have been re-designed to allow for this. Instances of damage by vandalism have been very few indeed. Maintenance of the trail has also put little extra strain on the Park's ranger team.

The report includes statements of costs and is available from:

Director of Countryside and Recreation  
Cheshire County Council  
County Hall  
Chester CH1 1SF

Jane Camp

## CLIFTON MARINA

DO BRINDLEY'S ENGINEERING WORKS HAVE A FUTURE?  
By David F Ford and Stan Frost  
University of Salford.

In the mid-eighteenth century, James Brindley the engineer installed a unique power scheme at the Wet Earth Colliery in the Irwell Valley to pump water from the mine workings. Parts of this system still exist and should be conserved for their historical, educational and recreational value.

The remains of the Wet Earth Colliery stand on the southern flood-plain of the River Irwell, in a recreational area known as Clifton Marina.

The River Irwell flows along the Irwell Valley Fault. This has a throw of nearly 1,000 metres which brought the underlying Carboniferous coal measures close to the surface. The coal was probably worked here in the sixteenth century (1) and in 1949 a shaft was sunk to reach the 3 metres thick Doe Seam, 50 metres below the surface (2). This was the start of the 'Wet Earth Colliery' - so-called because of underground floodwater entering the mine through the soft and

## Clifton Marina

fissured rock close to the fault. The high water table made mining progressively more difficult as the workings followed the coal down the seam.

James Brindley is thought to have first visited Clifton at the request of the mine owner in 1750 to investigate the flooding. Brindley had successfully used water wheels at his mill in Staffordshire but, although the adjacent River Irwell was a potential power supply, it was nearly 400 metres from the colliery flowing in a deep sandstone gorge below the pit head level (2).

In 1752 Brindley's solution was to use the sloping river bed in the vicinity of the colliery, by constructing a weir across the river upstream from the colliery. A tunnel was driven enabling water from the weir to flow down the tunnel and discharge from a siphon. (2,3).

The water from the siphon flowed into an open leat or feeder stream lying parallel to the edge of the Irwell

Gorge. To prevent excess quantities of water flooding into the mine workings, Brindley constructed several sluices in the bank to drain surplus water into the river.

The water discharged onto a large water wheel contained in a deep chamber at the colliery head. The water wheel activated pumps which drew water from the coal mine and discharge into the turbine chamber from where, together with the water driving the wheel it passed back into the River Irwell through a narrow tailrace tunnel. This system was completed in 1756 and worked successfully for over 170 years until the colliery closed in 1928. (2).

In 1970, Matthew Fletcher, who then owned the mine, built a canal to join the colliery to the Manchester, Bolton and Bury Canal via an aqueduct at Clifton junction about 2 kilometres downstream (4). Narrow boats entered the colliery by means of a 'loading basin' which replaced Brindley's original feeder channel to the wheel chamber. A penstock was built at the end of the loading basin taking water to the wheel.



## ANOTHER CHANCE

To pay your subscription you can send your cheques or postal orders for £3.00 to T R Stevens, 'Dol-werdd', Heol Gorsaf. Maenclochog, Clunderwen, Dyfed. Alternatively, you are more than welcome to use the Banker's Order form overleaf.



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Please pay National Westminster Bank Ltd, Palmerston Road, Southsea to the credit of the Society for the Interpretation of Britain's Heritage, account number 01925695, the sum of THREE POUNDS now, and continue to pay that amount on the first day of April in every year until further notice.

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Many features of Brindley's water power scheme and the canal still remain. Although now drained and invaded by vegetation, they are still a distinctive feature at Clifton Marina. The stone wing walls bordering the weir at Ringley are probably the original ones constructed by Brindley in 1752.

The weir itself was rebuilt of reinforced concrete so that the pond could provide cooling water for the adjacent coal fired Kearsley Power Station (2). On the north bank of the river immediately in front of Ringley Weir are the main tunnel sluice gates. These are operated on vertical rack and pinions by windlasses to regulate the flow of river water into the siphon tunnel.

The siphon system was effectively supplying Fletcher's canal until 1960 when the supply tunnel was severed. The siphon chamber exit has been covered by a concrete plinth and the pit head sealed for safety, but the

remains of wooden narrow boats lie overgrown on the canal bed. A cylindrical iron tube stands alongside the leat, extending vertically towards the river. This housed a pressure turbine and by water from the leat may have provided power for the coal washing process.(5) The position of the inlet to this turbine is marked in the feeder stream by an iron grill which protected the turbine cylinder.

The Wet Earth Colliery loading basin is now drained and overgrown. A dry dock, complete with lock gates, and a section of the basin were destroyed during excavations of gravel in 1969 for the adjacent motorway (4). The stone arch or penstock entrance at the end of the colliery basin still exists but was bricked up for safety reasons.

The tunnels and the wheel chamber were surveyed by Banks and Shofield (2), and estimates made from the measurements of the chamber indicate that it could have originally contained a

## Clifton Marina

water wheel as large as 7 metres in diameter.

Clifton Marina is littered with relics of industrial archaeology. Not only are the major features of Brindley's unique water power scheme still to be seen, but also Fletcher's Canal, the narrow boats, the loading basin and Fletcher's Folly. This is a tall chimney set back on the hillside and built when the lifting mechanism to bring coal to the surface was converted to steam. The newly installed boilers required a high chimney and in order that it should not be seen from Clifton House, the mine owner's home, it was erected out of view.

No plaque or sign indicates the historic value of Clifton Marina and indeed, although the boats lie neglected in the now dry bed of Fletcher's canal, they have become overgrown to provide intrinsically valuable wildlife habitats. The destruction of the watercourse joining the canal to the loading

basin now makes it difficult for the casual visitor to appreciate the existence of these relics which might easily be regarded as additional eyesores in a valley which has long been considered a byword for dereliction and which is only now attaining an identity with nature conservation and recreation. This designated area within the Manchester River Valleys scheme provides a unique opportunity to conserve both the industrial heritage and the wildlife of the area, but to achieve both objectives needs sensitivity. As valuable as the relics are, the industrial archaeologists are reluctant to disturb them unless they can be sure to protect and present them in a professional manner. This gives some respite to the wildlife, but in the meantime the relics are exposed to vandalism and it seems to be a seasonal challenge to attempt to burn the remains of the boats.

The Clifton Marina therefore, presents a conservation dilemma. Interpretation of the site would inevitably give the visitor many points of interest and allow a study of the interaction between the physical and human pro-



# Clifton Marina

cesses that have shaped the landscape to provide a great educational and recreational experience. But this has to be balanced against the cost of achieving this satisfactorily and the disruption to the natural regenerative process in the area. This creates a policy and management problem which may only be solved within the general context of the future of the Croal Irwell Valley. The unfortunate end result may well be the continuing neglect of the industrial artefacts.

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## Courses

### COUNTRYSIDE COMMISSION SPONSORED COURSES

The 1979-80 programme has just been released. For details contact the

Commission. The programme includes "Basic Course for Rangers; Courses on how to work with volunteers on practical skills, such as drystone walling or footpaths, a course on "Nature Conservation in Land Management." Under the heading "People and the Countryside", there are courses entitled "Communicating with the public in the Countryside", "Guided Walks", and "Countryside Interpretation." There are also courses for managers on "Organisation and Management", "Countryside Management and Recreation", and "Water and Recreation."

### SALFORD COURSES

Stan Frost has written to point out revisions to the MSC in Environmental Studies, and inviting applications for October 1979. Originally organised by the Department of Management Team, the course is now offered in three options: Man, Environment and Resources (covering a wide range of environmental affairs), Applied Environmental Biology (to present the biological principals and methods used in environmental assessment, development and protection) and Countryside Recreation Resources (to assess the needs, procedures and effects of access and recreation activities in the countryside).

The programme may be taken full-time over twelve months or by various part time arrangements. Further information from P J Greenwood, Department of Biology, University of Salford, M5 4WT.

## Books

### INTO THE SLATE MOUNTAIN

This is the title of a booklet written and designed by J G Isherwood, describing walks into the Middle Quarry of the old Oakley Slate Quarries, run by the Ffestiniog Mountain Tourist Centre Ltd, Blaenau Ffestiniog, Gwynedd, LL41 3NB. It is enhanced by a number of detailed drawings throughout the text.

## Books

### VISTOR CENTRES AND INTERPRETIVE FACILITIES

David Hayes has sent a copy of his report to the Highlands and Islands Development Board. The major part is a critical description of facilities in Scotland, listed by region and included are some humorous drawings depicting what we do to some of our important assets (see front cover). There are checklists of points to consider when providing major Visitor Centres or local plans. Also included is a summary of interpretation today and a list of recommendations, including that there should be an overall strategy for the Highlands and Islands, with a series of local interpretive plans. On agreement of a strategy, the existing system of museums and visitor centres should form a network covering the major aspects, with concomitant improvements to less capital-intensive areas of interpretation. Regular meetings to improve standards and co-ordination should be held.

### RECONCILING MAN WITH THE ENVIRONMENT by Eric Ashby

A generally optimistic text, which traces the forces at work in decision-making concerning the environment. The section in the first lecture that deals with awakening the public conscience records the marked tendency for rational arguments to receive no attention from the public, whereas overstated, alarmist accounts often do raise levels of awareness and concern. Professor Ashby firmly states his conviction that the Western World has for several centuries been progressing towards a greater awareness of the environmental repercussions of human activities and is achieving greater skill in husbanding the environment. Any activities to further improve levels of awareness and concern therefore can only add to the overall trend.

The book also makes some valuable observations on the role of economists in making value judgements when assessing potential environmental repercussions of a proposal: the discredited process of cost-benefit analysis has consistently under-estimated true costs. The book also mentions the controversial question of risk analysis, a subject around which Professor Ashby attracted some notice at the Windscale Enquiry. (The text of the Stamford University Leon Sloss Junior Memorial Lectures in Humanities 1977. OUP, London 1977 £4.25)

### SATANIC MILLS

by Marcus Binney et al

SAVE are publishing useful texts on aspects of the built heritage at a high rate. "Satanic Mills" complements an exhibition of the same name that was recently held at the Portman Gallery in London and adds to the list of other publications from the organisation, namely the excellent "Preservation Pays" by Max Hanna and Marcus Binney and the more recent "Cathedrals and Tourism".

"Satanic Mills" is a rather long and heavy-going account of the heritage of the Pennines that is invested in the textile mills of Lancashire and Yorkshire. The photographs by Randolph Lagenbach (which also feature in the exhibition) are excellent. The text, however, tends to argue for the preservation of every textile mill in the Pennines rather than seek out and highlight the excellent. Some would consider many of the remaining mills an affront to the landscape: the book seeks to point out the hidden values of the buildings but in over-stating its case jeopardises its chance of success.

The problem is in finding an economic use for the mills that should be preserved. There is a rather glib readiness to opt for suggesting craft centres, heritage centres, regional museums, etc., all ventures that, as members of this Society will know full well, need the right setting to succeed. When the heritage centre's

## Books

or museum's first *raison d'être* is to give a lease of life to a preserved building, the impact of any message therein is often limited; the need for such a centre or museum has to come first.

(Pub: *Save Britain's Heritage*, London 1979)

ALL AROUND THE YEAR  
by Michael Morpurgo

Michael Morpurgo, who spoke to the SIBH conference at Dartington about Farms for City Children has published his diary of a year in the life of Parsonage Farm. This is the farm used by Farms for City Children but "All Around the Year" restricts itself to the purely farming activities and makes no mention of the educational visitors.

It covers the year from the end of the drought in September 1976, which included the installation of a new milking parlour at the Farm and a consequent need to milk out of doors during the depth of the Winter while it was being installed.

The book gives an extremely strong and evocative picture that could be true of many mixed farms in the West Country. Sadly, only a few people can visit the farm but for those few on school visits the book will be invaluable. For the less fortunate, the book is still a delight with the clear text and strong atmospherics of Ted Hughes' poems, especially written and the photographs of James Ravilious, who is currently compiling an archive of photographs of rural life in Devon for the Beaford Centre.

(Pub: John Murray 1979, £4.95)

Terry Robinson

VISITOR CENTRES STUDY

The report of the study of Visitor Centres - sponsored by the British Tourist Authority, Countryside Commission, Countryside Commission for Scotland, English Tourist Board,

Forestry Commission, Nature Conservancy Council and Nottinghamshire County Council - is about to be published and will be available from the Countryside Commission at Cheltenham, price £4.00

The study, commissioned in 1976, was carried out by Dartington Amenity Research Trust in association with the Department of Psychology at the University of Surrey. The purpose of the study was to appraise the effectiveness of the interpretation at 16 selected visitor centres in adding to the visitor's enjoyment and understanding of the countryside; and to assess the value of the different means of interpretation used.

The study was the most recent in the programme of research studies into individual types of interpretive provision which DART has carried out for the Countryside Commission and members of CRRAG - "Farm Open Days" and "An appraisal of Self-guided Trails" have already been published by the Countryside Commission.

DART has also prepared two further draft booklets for the Countryside Commission's advisory series - one entitled "Self-guided Trails: A Guide to Organisers", the other "Farm Interpretation: A Guide to Organisers." These are shortly to be published by the Commission.

THE DERWENT VALLEY INTERPRETATION PROJECT

The final report of this study carried out by DART for a group of sponsors (which included Derbyshire County Council, Peak Park Joint Planning Board, West Derbyshire and Amber Valley District Councils, the Countryside Commission, the Department of the Environment, English Tourist Board, Nature Conservancy Council, Nottingham University and a number of local voluntary amenity and conservation societies) was submitted last September. Consultations and discussions are still being held between the various sponsors and agencies involved on the action to be taken on the report.

The aim of the study was "to examine how

## Books

the natural and historic resources of the Cromford and Derwent Valley area might more fully serve the interests of the public to an extent consistent with the social and economic needs of the area and within the objectives of the local planning authorities, through a more co-ordinated and extended interpretation of these resources to the public".

The report describes the wealth of natural and historic resources in the valley - its geology, natural history and archaeology, and the many features which serve to illustrate the story of man's use of his environment: features associated with leadmining, the use of water power, the development of canals and railways, the history of tourism, and modern agricultural and industrial activities. Most significant are those features which give the Derwent Valley a unique place in our heritage - mills, waterwheels, and industrial settlements which are associated with the early development of the cotton textile industry and, in particular, with Richard Arkwright's innovative work on the application of waterpower to cotton-spinning machinery.

The report proposes a strategy for the interpretation of these features, with reference to the need for conservation and the implications for educational opportunities, recreation and tourism; and suggests ways in which the many public and private agencies interested in conservation and interpretation in the area might work together to implement the proposals.

The support of public and private organisations has already been given to the campaign to save one of the sites referred to in the report - Caudwell's Mill at Rowsley, a rare example of a 19th century water-powered roller mill. The recently formed "Friends of Caudwell's Mill" are now attempting to set up a Trust to conserve and interpret the mill to the public. Further information on the project can be obtained from Christopher Charlton, c/o Tawney House, Matlock, Derbyshire.

## ENGLISH CATHEDRALS AND TOURISM

A report published at £3.80 by the English Tourist Board has the subtitle "Problems and Opportunities." A survey of visitor facilities at the various cathedrals throughout the country was made; the findings are summarised and recommendations made. The book is divided into a number of sections, such as visitor patterns, revenue and costs, publicity and liaison and interpretation. This varies from simple guidebooks to the Visitor Centre at Norwich and Robin Wade's exhibition at Coventry. Other methods include guided tours and audio aids. The report states that "there is scope for more interpretive exhibitions and visitor centres for cathedrals", this being based on their financial advantage. Among the recommendations is one that there should be single 'walk-round' guides with numbered plaques, eliminating the need for large explanatory plaques, and reaching more people than the tenth who buy the glossy guides, which are bought more as souvenirs.

## INTERPRETIVE PLANNING ON NATURE RESERVES by J E Beatty

This considers interpretation as a function of recreation, education, inspiration and management and clearly states how to plan interpretive facilities in Nature Parks (University College of London 1978, Discussion Papers in Conservation No.17)

## NATURE TRAILS IN THE NORTH-WEST

This is an alphabetical list of trails, with the location of each shown on a map with full details of length, type of flora and fauna, and where to obtain the trail. Available from Museum Information Centre, William Brown Street, Liverpool. L3 8EN, price 25p plus p & p.

## ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION BIBLIOGRAPHY

The Council for Environmental Education has produced a select bibliography on some of the main subject areas. Send foolscap SAE to them at School of Education, University of Reading, London Road, Reading. RG1 5AQ

## Take Note!

### RECREATIONAL PATHS

A new booklet, free from the Countryside Commission, describes these. Thirty-three are listed, with brief descriptions. No path is shorter than nine miles, all are properly waymarked, and all have some sort of published guide available.

### Gwent Valleys

Gwent County Council Planning Department's work in environmental interpretation includes guided walks, farm open days, interpretation centres, a lecture service and various publications. One such has just been produced on the Industrial Heritage of the valleys. The introduction deals with iron, coal, transport, industrial change and social conditions, and the text for each of the three valleys described links in with this. In full colour, it is intended for the interested general public and schools' use.

Priced at 20p the leaflet is available from the Public Relations Officer, Gwent County Council, County Hall, Cwmbran, Gwent, NP44 2XF

### THE ART OF THE FELT MAKER

This exhibition, probably the first ever to be entirely devoted to felt, has been researched and mounted by ABBOT HALL ART GALLERY and made available for tour.

Felt is one of the earliest materials to have been made by man and almost certainly predates textile processes of spinning and weaving.

The history of felt is traced from its earliest source to its most modern application in the work of some modern felt-makers, through the display of historic and contemporary felts. Further details from Abbot Hall Art Gallery, Kendal, Cumbria

### NEW FACILITIES AT IRONBRIDGE

A new study centre has been opened, partly financed by the Walker Trust. It will be run by the Ironbridge Gorge Museum Trust which with the Y.H.A. will run a Youth Hostel next door, to be opened in 1980.

In Coalbrookedale, the Coach House Gallery has been opened. It will be permanently devoted to displaying material from the Elton collection with a series of changing exhibitions. The Coalbrookedale branch line reopened to passengers in May with a halt next to the Museum. There will be direct services from Birmingham and Wolverhampton.

Other events commemorate the bicentenary of the bridge; among them the opening of the new Coalbrookdale Museum of Iron in the Great Warehouse, and exhibitions in London and Washington D.C. Further details from the Bicentenary Director, Ironbridge Gorge Museum Trust, Ironbridge, Telford, Salop. TF8 7AW

### ICE - AD

Tony Escritt writes to say that he has gone back into teaching as Head of Geography at Harrow while running an Iceland Information and Lecture Service at 2 Church Brow, Chapel-en-le-Frith, Stockport, Cheshire.

### GUIDED WALKS IN NOTTINGHAMSHIRE

A programme of guided walks has been set up by the Leisure Services Department in conjunction with numerous local voluntary groups.

There is a guide on all walks either from a local history or civic society or from the Council's ranger service, who will draw attention to and explain points of interest along the way.

The guides give their time voluntarily, and with the County Council having paid their travel expenses to a training session, and the cost of all publicity, the walks are provided free of charge to the public.

Friedel Plant

## Take Note!

### RICHARD HARRISON FOR MARY ROSE

In November 1978 the decision was made to completely excavate over two years the wreck of Henry VIII's "Mary Rose", which lies in the seabed off Portsmouth. This will be followed by the recovery of the hull to form the major constituent of a Tudor Ship Museum in Portsmouth. Richard has been appointed the Executive Director of the Mary Rose Trust to take effect from 1st August. The Trust has just produced the first of its monthly bulletins.



### INTERPRETATION IN PORTSMOUTH

Dartington Amenity Research Trust has recently submitted a report on the third of their area interpretation studies. The report, entitled "Defence of the Realm: an interpretive strategy for Portsmouth and the surrounding region", has been prepared for the sponsors of the study - Portsmouth City Council and the Southern Tourist Board. It is now being considered by the steering group for the study representing the main agencies involved in the administration of historic sites in the area - Portsmouth City Council, the Ministry of Defence, the Department of the Environment and Hampshire County Council, together with the Southern Tourist Board and other local organisations with an interest in the area's heritage and its interpretation.

### VISIT THE VALLEYS

The Wales Tourist Board launched a major promotion on 31st May, to promote the interesting and unusual attractions of the valleys. There are several new interpretive facilities including an Interpretive Centre at Rogerstone near Newport, the Welsh Miners' Museum at Afan Argoed.

At Blaenavon an important example of a late 18th century ironworks, which ceased operating by 1860, is now being restored, and interpretive facilities are planned, together with a site museum. At the Dan-yr-Ogof show caves a new facility has been added. An archaeological dig, a burial, a hyaena den, scale models of cave dwelling animals and a Bronze Age village have been recreated. There is a detailed commentary.

### DEMONSTRATION FARMS

The Countryside Commission have issued a new booklet detailing the achievements of their new Agricultural landscape policy. Ten out of twelve Demonstration Farms have been established. The booklet is available free from the Commission.

### INTERPRETATION SUPPLEMENT

The Countryside Recreation Management Association is preparing a series of publications on associated topics. The next edition will deal specifically with Interpretation. If any SIBH members have articles they would like to contribute, please contact: Geoff Wolstencroft, Chief Warden, Croal Irwell Valley, 7 Bankfield, Westhoughton, Bolton.

### SCUNTHORPE INTERPRETATION DEPARTMENT

Scunthorpe Museums Department has created a new department dealing exclusively with Countryside Interpretation, with the help of a three year 50% grant from the Countryside Commission. An Interpretive Officer has been appointed to develop the new service, based at Normanby Country Park and at the museum's Educational Nature Reserve at Brumby Common.

## Take Note!

### YOUNG BATTLE ABBEY

East Sussex have produced a Young Visitors' Guide to help explain Battle Abbey and The Battle of Hastings 1066. It contains a quiz, a crossword, drawings to colour, plenty of illustrations and a straightforward text. Like many children's guides, it will be of interest to adults also, and is obtainable at 30p from the address above.

### LICHFIELD HERITAGE CENTRE

About £1m is to be spent on a Treasury Tower and Heritage Centre in a church. The Heritage and Visitors Centre will present the story of the City through the lives of its great men of arts and science. The City will be viewed from a platform above the bells, and there will be a gift shop. The project will be managed by a charitable company, the revived Guild of St. Mary. The design is being carried out by Colin Milnes Design Association, and opening is expected to be Spring 1980.

### BEDE MONASTERY MUSEUM JARROW

This new museum presents the history of the Saxon and Medieval monastery of St. Paul's Jarrow. The museum at Jarrow Hall contains reproductions of the more important Jarrow Manuscripts and objects excavated from the site revealing the daily life of the monks. The Department of the Environment is marking out the site to show the plan of the Saxon and Medieval buildings.

### OFFA'S DYKE CENTRE

The Offa's Dyke Association are preparing to open in the Old School at Knighton, Powys a centre to interpret the Offa's Dyke Long Distance Path. A Manpower Services Commission scheme is providing the opportunity. The Centre will be attached to a Youth Hostel and will include a static exhibition as well as informal recreation facilities in the grounds of the building.

### MORWELLHAM

The George and Charlotte Mine at Morwellham, one of the many copper mines which shipped ore through the port on the River Tamar, is to be formally opened on July 5th by Mr Richard O'Brian, Chairman of the Manpower Services Commission which funded the re-opening of the mine and the construction of the railway. The mine scheme includes a railway which takes visitors from Morwellham alongside the river into the mine and an underground 'Son et Lumière' interpretation of the different phases of copper-mining. The interpretation was grant-aided by the South West Area Museum Council and prepared by Chris Bray of Logo Designs.

The Morwellham Recreation Company is now in the process of restoring the Great Dock which will be a valuable new element in telling the story of Morwellham as a riverport; and work is about to start on the restoration of the raised railways which brought ore from the Devon Great Consol's Mine to the quays. Facilities for audio-visual interpretation are being extended. Financial help is being given by the Manpower Services Commission Countryside Commission, South West Area Museum Council and the Pilgrim Trust and the Carnegie United Kingdom Trust. These new developments, together with extended publicity and improvement of on-site interpretation have led to a substantial increase in visitor numbers.

### AWARDS FOR FORESTRY COMMISSION AND ACME DESIGN

The Forestry Commissions Visitor Centre at Bwlch Nant-yr-Arian, near Aberystwyth, has received a Prince of Wales Award and a British Tourist Authority Commendation. The interpretive exhibition at the Centre was designed by Acme Design.

Acme Design are currently engaged in a number of projects including exhibitions on Thomas Telford for the National Trust at Conwy; local Civil War history for the Grosvenor Museum, Chester; an Owain Glyndwr exhibition at Machynleth; as well as the work in progress for The Valley Inheritance, Pontypool, for the Torfaen Museum Trust.

## Take Note!

### CAMDEN WORKS MUSEUM IN BATH

In a building whose uses have included a real tennis court in 1777, pin-factory, luggage factory and malthouse, is housed the entire stock-in-trade of J B Bowler, a Victorian brass founder, general engineer and aerated water manufacturer, who set up in business in 1872. The display recreates as fully as possible the original premises in Corn Street. It gives the visitor a view of Bath's commercial and industrial history quite in contrast to the Roman and Georgian aspects seen elsewhere.

### PIERSSENÉ'S PRIVATE PRACTICE

Andrew writes that following the (perhaps temporary) cessation of the Norfolk Heritage Project, he is setting up a practice in 'interpretive planning and design', about which he hopes to circulate a brochure soon. His new address is Old Sun House, Damgate Street, Wymondham, Norfolk.

### VICTORIA AND ALBERT MUSEUM SHOP

This offers its facilities as a selling point and shop window in London to regional museums, galleries and learned and amenity societies. Any organisation which has guides, catalogues etc. that are relevant to the Victoria and Albert's own collections - on ceramics, furniture and woodwork, architecture, sculpture, textiles, dress, paintings, prints, drawings, photographs, metal-work, conservation, toys and games, theatre - and who would like to participate in the scheme, should contact Nicky Bird, Publications Officer, Department of Museum Science, The Victoria and Albert Museum, London SW7 2RL

### FARM OPEN DAYS

Bruce McGregor has put together a chatty and informative newsletter which is aimed at organisers of Open Days. If you would like to receive it, contact him at the Association of Agriculture, 16/20 Strutton Ground, London SW1P 2HP

### STEP INTO INTERPRETATION

Dorset and Nottinghamshire are two County Councils which have taken advantage of the MSC's STEP programme to establish teams to provide interpretive schemes and generally help improve visitor enjoyment in their area.

The Dorset Heritage Coast Team, which is an extension of last year's programme, is carrying out an extensive campaign, in conjunction with the army and voluntary groups such as the Conservation Corps and the Young Farmers', to encourage better public behaviour in a heavily visited rural area, and to increase facilities. Large areas have been cleared of military buildings and litter and made more accessible. Information boards have been erected and this work is to be extended to other parts of the coast. To carry out this work there is an Education and Interpretation Unit consisting of Supervisor, Designer, Illustrator, Survey Assistant/Scriptwriter and an Interpretation/Information Co-ordinator. A Conservation Unit consists of a Supervisor, Survey Assistant, Charge-hand/driver and five labourers.

The STEP team based at Rufford Country Park in Nottinghamshire has been set up to give help to local societies hoping to establish interpretive schemes, by providing practical help. They are providing assistance with the research, design and construction of interpretive plaques, displays, exhibitions and leaflets and also carry out landscaping work where it is beneficial to visitor enjoyment. The team consists of a Researcher/Co-ordinator, Designer, Joiner/Supervisor, Painter, Decorator and three labourers.

Andy Weaver

### EXPLORING MUSEUMS REPRINTED

A guide to the museums of Sussex has just been reprinted. There are six extra museums listed, to go with the 53 already listed. At 15p, the price is unchanged and the booklet is produced by East Sussex County Planning Department, Southover Road, Lewes.

# interpretation newsletter

## Conferences

### ASSOCIATION OF INDEPENDENT MUSEUMS

A seminar on "Education in Independent Museums" will be run on 21st September at Avoncroft Museum, Bromsgrove. Speakers John Hodgson (National Trust Education Advisor) and three others. Details from Christopher Zeuner, Weald and Downland Museum, Singleton, Chichester, Sussex.

### COASTAL RECREATION

A weekend conference based at Seale Hayne Agricultural College, Newton Abbott, Devon, 21st-23rd March 1980. A Countryside Recreation Management Association conference in collaboration with local and national speakers. Please contact Peter Beale at Seale Hayne College for details.



### COUNTRYSIDE FOR THE DISABLED

A weekend workshop organised by the Countryside Recreation Management Association in conjunction with the British Sports Association for the Disabled at the Calvert Trust Outdoor Pursuits Centre at Keswick on 16th - 18th November, costing about £30. Enquiries to Cynthia Blackwell, Department of Life Sciences, The Polytechnic, Huddersfield.

### EUROPEAN HERITAGE LANDSCAPE CONFERENCE 1980

An informal conference for local manager and staff of Europe's protected landscapes, entitled "Land Management and Conservation in European Naturparke, Parcs Naturels, National Parks UK and equivalent reserves", will take place at Losehill Hall on April 7th to 11th 1980. Details from Peter Townsend, Peak National Park Centre, Losehill Hall, Castleton, Derbyshire S30 2WB.

### AREA MUSEUMS SERVICE FOR SOUTH-EAST ENGLAND

A seminar entitled "Visits to Places of Technological Interest in the Portsmouth Area" will be held in September. Please contact Linda Gregory at 34 Burners Lane, Kiln Farm, Milton Keynes, MK11 3DA

## SOCIETY'S USA TRIP

Martin Orrom has undertaken much preparatory work to provide a provisional programme for a ten-day study visit of various important sites from 31st May to 9th June 1980. It has yet to be decided whether the society would organise flights across or if individuals will make their own way.

### ITINERARY

The first day would be spent free in Washington, where there are a great many interpretive facilities. Day two would be a coach journey and visit to Harper's Ferry. Day three would be spent at Hopewell Village which is thirty miles west of Philadelphia. Day four would be spent at Gettysburg, and Antietam en route to the Skyline Drive, where various facilities would be investigated the following day. Day six would consist of visits to Petersburg and Jamestown, and travelling to Williamsburg where the whole of the next day and the morning of day eight would be spent. The afternoon would be a visit to George Washington's birthplace before returning to Washington for a final day of visits and dispersal.

If you have any comments on this programme, please send them to Martin Orrom. The cost may be in the region of £400 including flight, accommodation, coach and courier.