

interpretation

NUMBER 15

spring 1980



* NORFOLK
* SIGNS

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6

* VIKING YORK
* STYAL

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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.

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The Newsletter

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Cover picture: Amazed at Brighton

EDITOR'S NOTE

Just a few weeks ago, I had almost no material for this issue of Interpretation (having not yet received responses from several people who had been approached for articles).

The response to my appeal was magnificent, with the result that some the information has been held back for the next issue, or has been edited somewhat brutally for inclusion in this issue. Whilst always being grateful for news, I was particularly pleased to receive pieces that discuss issues or facilities. May your thoughts and opinions (controversial or not) continue to come this way!

Next copy date will be June 13th 1980

Norfolk

NORFOLK AND NORWICH - Back ground to the Society's 1980 Spring Meeting

Norfolk is a big county crammed full with small features. Its mainly arable countryside is punctuated with modest market towns and innumerable Domesday Book villages. Norwich, which with its suburbs has a population of about 200,000 is indisputably the 'capital' of Norfolk. Its independant status as a 'City and County' in its own right (granted by Henry IV in 1404) was regrettably taken away in 1973. But with its Norman castle and cathedral and its many medieval and Georgian buildings it remains a very proud and fascinating ancient city, socially lively and forward looking, its centre marred by comparatively few serious twentieth century blemishes.

Great Yarmouth on the east coast of the county has about 70,000 inhabitants; King's Lynn in the west about 35,000; and Thetford on the southern border with

Suffolk about 25,000. Most of the old market towns are much smaller, while many of the lesser villages, suffering from inadequate public services, have populations smaller than a century ago, and seem destined to die.

Apart from the extreme west of the county, which shares the fens with Lincolnshire and Cambridgshire, most of Norfolk is, geologically speaking, a vast slab of chalk tilting from the north-west (where chalk cliffs face the sea at Hunstanton) to the south-east, where the chalk lies some 500 feet below the sea at Great Yarmouth. Over this slab the glaciers of the Ice Age dropped their rubbish of sand and gravel, clay and brick-earth and flint.

The clays and loams and much of the sand form our arable fields. Brick-earth, flint, chalk and clay, together with 'carstone' from the Greensand which surfaces as a narrow belt between the western edge of the chalk and the fenland, provide our basic building materials - or used to. Sand and gravel and chalk are still excavated for various commercial uses, chiefly for manufacturing concrete building components. Norfolk exports concrete sections to bridge other counties' motorways: we have none of our own. We have had no other minerals to exploit, so that the Industrial Revolution made scarcely any impact on the face of Norfolk's countryside.

Agriculture is the county's big industry, and very big business much of it is. Half the farmland in Norfolk is in the hands of just over 500 farmers: the other half is shared by the remaining 5,650. East Anglia's comparatively dry winters and long, warm summers make Norfolk the county's prime producer of barley and sugar beet, and keep it high in the league for wheat and vegetables. Norfolk also ranks first for poultry (Norfolk turkeys and Norfolk ducklings have been famous for centuries), and is celebrated for the production of mustard. South Norfolk has been making cider for hundreds of years.

All this profitable agricultural activity means that the countryside continues to be 'rural' - but the intensive use of the land makes it rather difficult for the visitor to enjoy. A high proportion of those who govern in Norfolk, at parish, district and county level, are farmers or landowners, who (like most of the other inhabitants) value lack of disturbance. This is undoubtedly reflected in attitudes to such things as tourists and public footpaths.

As a maritime county with a coastline second in length only to Devon and Cornwall, Norfolk naturally has a



Norfolk

strong sea-faring tradition. King's Lynn and Great Yarmouth (both still retaining some fine medieval and later buildings, and fragments of their town walls) have flourished as trading posts for the best part of 800 years, each benefitting from being situated at the mouth of a complex system of navigable rivers. Fisheries of various kinds have had their ups and downs: the greatest loss was the demise of the Great Yarmouth herring fishery in the 1960s after nine centuries' unbroken tradition. Of the county's native seamen, Vancouver attained fame as an explorer, Nelson (and sundry other admirals) in the navy, and Henry Blogg as a lifeboat Coxswain.

To the naturalist, Norfolk means the Broads, with bitterns, bearded tits, swallowtail butterflies and conflict of interest with the holiday industry; the sandy Breckland in the south-west of the county, with stone curlews, crossbills and relics of a steppe flora; the North Norfolk salt-marshes; the estuarine Breydon Flats, near Yarmouth; the Ouse Washes.

To the agriculturalist, Norfolk is the county of Coke of Holkham and Turnip Townshend. To the architectural historian, Norfolk is the county of 700 medieval churches (reminder of the days when the county was among the most prosperous and densely populated in Britain, and Norwich for a while second in wealth only to London); and of many fine country houses such as Blickling Hall, Houghton Hall, Oxbrugh Hall and Sandringham House (all of different periods).

To the social historian Norfolk may appear as a paradox. It is the county of Boudicca and the Iceni, of Kett and his rebels, of Tom Hidgen and the 'Burstons School strike.' Yet it has been very recently a county where the villager touched his cap respectfully to the squire, where the farm worker who joined a union risked his job and his home: it is a county of conservative politics, with intense pride in its past. It is a perverse mixture of revolt and conservatism, orthodoxy and non-conformity.

As for interpretation, we do not offer anything on a grand scale. Perhaps we have not the financial resources - as the untimely demise of the Norfolk Heritage project indicates - nor the population to sustain big interpretive ventures. Those who attend the Society's spring meeting will see an interesting variety of approaches to interpretation on a modest scale: commercial, ecclesiastical, local government, voluntary organisation, private enterprise and even one initiated by the European Community headquarters in Brussels. The theme will be "Origins and objectives of interpretive schemes: how are these reflected in the product?" There will be opportunities to discuss each project with someone who was concerned in creating it.

Andrew Pierssené

Books on Walls

IN DEFENCE OF BOOK-ON-A-WALL

As the pendulum of fashion swings to and fro, there are some of us who enjoy giving it a shove every now and then to try and make it wobble a little. Here goes.

There is currently a fashionable fear of offering text in interpretive displays. The more we find ourselves reduced to actually using words, the greater our sense of shame. The most hurtful criticism with which a display may be dismissed is to say that it is 'merely a book on a wall'.

Now it is observably true that many visitors don't like to be confronted with long blocks of text. The popular daily papers take immense - almost laughable - care to break up such blocks. Long blocks of text are also avoided by many of the best modern 'interpretive' books. They use narrow columns, short paragraphs, intriguing headlines, numerous photographs and line drawings, variation of roman type-face with italic, and brief 'feature' paragraphs intruded into the text in their own 'box' borders. One might as well dismiss this sort of book as 'display panel on a page,' as dismiss the display panel as 'book on a wall.'

What matters is whether the material, text or illustrations or whatever, grabs the visitor or reader. Good communication by book is surprisingly similar to good communication by display panel, and many of the same principles (which we may work out for ourselves) will apply equally to panel or printed page.

If we want to find the essential difference between display and book, we must look at the contexts in which they may be used, and the human situations and motivations involved.

First, the material in an interpretive display, even though it may be similar to that found in a book, will be 'scaled up.' The sheer size and boldness of titles, the enlargement of photographs beyond what any book could contain, the magnification of line drawings, can make a momentarily bigger impact than the same material reduced to page size. Display panels create an environment within which the visitor moves: the book rests in his lap. The material may be the same, but it is experienced in quite different ways.

Secondly, the text in a display is, psychologically if not physically, easier to get at. The argument that 'you might as well read the same thing in a book' is a poor one, because it ignores human situations. A large proportion of visitors probably do not read non-fiction at all; and even of those who do, few will in practice visit their library to seek an appropriate book. If they do find such a book, it will be days after the visit and many miles from the interpreted feature. No, many a visitor will be delighted to find that someone has taken the trouble to offer him a suitable piece of interpretive text on the spot, while experience is still warm.

You may, of course, be able to offer the visitor the same material in booklet form, and dispense with a display. But it is well known that guide literature, where available on site, is for the most part not studied until (presumably) the visitor gets back home. Many visitors do not buy it anyway. Quite possibly the most helpful provision would be display and

guide literature - and it would not matter if the texts and illustrations were the same. Certainly, a book or booklet, once it is in the possession of a visitor, has the advantage over a display, that it can be referred back to much more easily. But how often is it used that way?

When visitors do not seem to appreciate a 'book on the wall,' it is often because the book is a dull one. It doesn't tell them what they want to know, or it is unclear or long-winded; or the text itself is physically uncomfortable to follow. Or the illustrations are irrelevant, or poorly reproduced, or hard to relate to the text or the feature interpreted.

Another possible situation in which a 'book on a wall' may fail to satisfy, is where it is at a distance from the feature it interprets. The 'curiosity' motive, which the feature itself should stimulate, is weak or absent. To replace the display with working models, recorded sound or electronic gadgetry might perhaps re-engage the visitor's attention - but probably the display itself would become the sole object of his interest, while the interpreted feature ceased to matter. Such are the hazards of off-site interpretation - and whether you care depends on what your motives were in the first place.

On the other hand, some very successful panels, that are in essence no more than 'leaflets on a wall', have been placed alongside architectural or industrial archaeology features where there has been no facility for providing literature. At one such site I know, some 98% of visitors read the 'leaflet on a wall'.

The only valid occasion for disapproving of a 'book on a wall' (assuming that it is a good book) is where an opportunity to use more stimulating techniques is being wasted. Three-dimensional material, working models, film - these may (if you can afford them) be able to interpret some aspects of some features better than a two-dimensional display.

But 'interpreting better' consists solely in enhancing further the visitor's experience of the feature

Books on Walls

being interpreted (we forget this only too easily). Which medium will 'interpret better' is a matter for fresh, careful consideration in each particular case. No doubt the very novelty of some techniques may help to arrest the attention of visitors who otherwise would give no thought at all. Yet, even if it is less glamorous than some of its fellow-media, 'book on a wall' well done and appropriately used will, I suggest, survive the vagaries of fashion as a perennially useful interpretive technique. Until, that is, the printed work itself becomes a historical curiosity to be interpreted to our descendants by media as yet undreamed of.

Stephen Herbert

Signs

SIGNS OF THE TIMES

There are many occasions in national parks or recreation areas when a sign is required. It may be for direction, information (figure 1), explanation (figure 2) or warning.

Sometimes, however, a sign is not the right answer to a particular problem; either because an alternative technique is better (figure 3), the sign is not adequately maintained or the sign detracts from its environment.

This brief article tries to suggest the range of points that should be considered before decisions are made on the type, style and location of signs - or even whether a sign is required at all. These lists are not exhaustive. By the time this article appears you can be sure some new materials or techniques will have been developed.

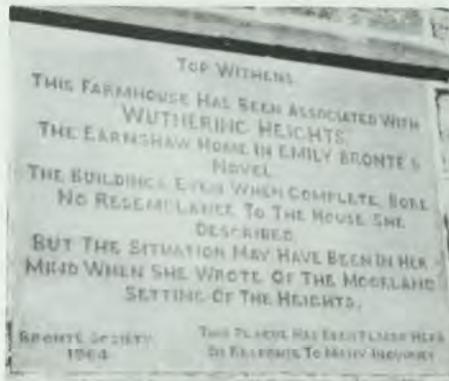
However, we suggest that the following factors deserve consideration before you dash out and make or order a sign. First look at your needs, your resources and the site.

- What is the purpose of the sign? Is it really necessary?
- What skills do you have available for originating the artwork?



Figure one ↗

↖ Figure two



- What resources will you have for erecting and maintaining the sign?
- Is the site subject to excessive weathering - light, heat, cold, wind, sunlight, condensation, precipitation, extreme of weather?
- Is the site subject to excessive wear and tear, animal attack, physical attack, surface damage?
- How many identical signs are required? Some techniques are only economic in large quantities.
- What techniques are available in your area? It may be possible to use specific local skills.
- What is the expected life of the

sign? Some signs are designed for permanence - others for transience.

- What design quality is appropriate? Some sites deserve "historic" treatment whilst others need "rustic" "urban" etc. or they need to be in a specific house style (although that might be inappropriate for an individual site - a point to be argued with your management).
- Is the sign compatible with its surroundings? Is it a traffic hazard? Does it create unacceptable glare from reflected light etc.?
- Will the sign need revising or updating at regular intervals or at short notice?
- How much money have you got - not just for manufacture, but for design, artwork origination and processing, transport, erection and maintenance?

You then have to match your need with the techniques and materials available.

Considerations here include:

- Whether you intend to make the sign yourself or use a contractor.
- What techniques are available locally
- How long design, manufacture and delivery will take.
- Whether there are graphic limitations (eg. ability to reproduce illustrations, size of lettering, width of line etc.)
- Whether there are manufacturing limitations (eg. maximum size of machine, material, lettering, etc.; limited range of type faces or colours etc.)
- Whether colours, typography etc., can be matched for subsequent signs or revision of current signs.
- What means of support are necessary? These might be:
 - direct application of sign graphics to an existing surface
 - built in graphic panels
 - attached graphic panels or



Figure three

- iv. graphic panels with an integral system.
- What are the relative costs of alternative techniques? Don't forget to consider artwork, transport, mounting, erection, replacement, maintenance, etc., as well as unit costs for different production runs. (It may be cheaper to make 3 or 4 identical signs now rather than start from scratch again if a sign is vandalised).

So, having been through this procedure what techniques and materials are available? The range of variations is enormous. They can, however, be summarised into a number of categories:

- Casting/moulding : This produces a reverse image shape from a pre-formed mould. It is applicable to metals, rigid plastics and cement and is most economic in large quantities.
- Routing/engraving/carving : This involves cutting into the surface of the material. It is appropriate for metals, rigid plastics and stone. It provides a long lasting image (as hard-wearing as the sign material) and is very suitable for one-off signs although jigs or templates may be used with some materials to reproduce identification signs.
- Surface printing : The application of graphics to the surface of the material by means of autographic

Signs

- (eg. silk screen, wood cut, lino cut), photostatic (eg. Xerography), Hot press, photographic (eg. letterpress, half-tone blocks, photo-gravure), planographic (eg. lithographic) printing. This is a very widely used set of techniques and could be applicable to metals, woods, rigid plastics, flexible plastics, stone, cement, paper or fabric.
- d. **Photographic:** The application of graphics to metals, paper or fabrics by means of a photographic process. This is a very successful means of reproducing half-tone artwork and detailed illustrations by doing away with intermediate screens.
- e. **Anodised:** A process whereby a thin layer of coloured images in aluminium oxide is silk screened onto aluminium sheet.
- f. **Pressed:** The physical pressing of shapes into flat sheets of material, usually metal. In most cases the impressed shapes are subsequently painted.
- g. **Branded:** The burning of an image into the face of a wooden sign. Although the cost of the branding iron may be expensive it is a simple process, much under-used. The possibility of a branding iron carrying interchangeable letters could make this a very useful process.
- h. **Painted:** Professional signwriting can still produce very acceptable signs, particularly for one-off situations, since the range of styles, colours, images etc., is unlimited. Amateur attempts, on the other hand, can be disastrous although stencils would help.
- j. **Vacuum formed:** The process of drawing plastic material into a mould by producing a vacuum in the mould. The material has to be heated evenly and to exactly the right temperature. An excellent process for signs or displays requiring an element of physical relief (eg. relief maps) especially if they can be produced in large numbers.

- k. **Etched:** A traditional means of cutting images into the surface of a metal by eating away the surface, usually with acid. It is now expensive and often superseded by engraving.
- l. **Encapsulation/lamination:** An increasingly important range of techniques depending on modern chemical technology. It consists of containing sheets of graphics within a protective skin which usually provides both protection and physical support. Not only must the outer skin be proof against attack and weathering, the graphics must not fade, deteriorate or delaminate.

Finally, remember the complexity of the problems. It is rarely as simple as it seems. There are nearly always alternatives that you have never thought of and potential problems you have never contemplated. It is simplicity itself to make and erect a sign. It is very much harder to make and erect a sign that says what you want it to, remains legible and attractive throughout its planned life, offends nobody and does not cost the earth.

NB. The Countryside Commission will shortly be publishing a report by John Allwood on sign techniques and materials. This article is based on his research.

John Allwood (design consultant)
Ray Taylor (Countryside Commission)

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Plaques

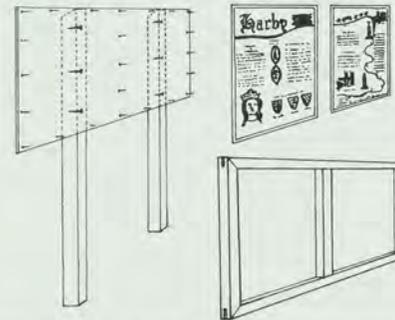
PLAQUES IN NOTTINGHAMSHIRE

The design of the type of plaque employed by the Rufford STEP team was dictated by a number of factors. Firstly, the subject material was to be encapsulated in stiff plastic sheeting; secondly, the construction had to be within the limits of our facilities and as the plaques are for local societies and thus often individual items, cost is very important. We came up with the design of a wooden

frame to surround the encapsulated artwork, which is mounted onto a ply backboard. The cost of encapsulation is less than £5, so the artwork was designed to be easily reproduced and therefore very cheap to replace if vandalised or updated.

The backboard is screwed onto oak posts which gives it a strong basic structure in the ground. The hardwood frame has a rebate into which the backboard fits, protecting the edge of the ply from the weather. The fact that the frame can be detached from the backboard once in position means the artwork can be replaced if necessary by an unskilled person, although it is complicated enough to deter vandals. Weather-proofing of the wood is completed by several coats of Sadolins finished with polyurethane varnish (a life of 10 years is expected).

Sizes are variable according to needs although a maximum width of 24 inches for the artwork is dictated by the encapsulating machine. Other methods of mounting (eg. for walls) have been developed.



The result is an aesthetically pleasing, versatile and relatively cheap plaque with most of the benefits of other methods. This design has now been adopted for all the exterior interpretive panels in Nottinghamshire County Council parks.

Andy Weaver

STOP PRESS

1980/81 subscriptions due on April 1st!

Hereford & Worc.

COUNTRYSIDE INTERPRETATION IN HEREFORD AND WORCESTER

A leaflet entitled 'Countryside Recreation in the County of Hereford and Worcester' has been produced by the Countryside Section of the County Estates Surveyors Department. It comprises a map on one side and text on the other and, in addition to information about the County Council's own sites, it also lists details about public areas provided by other organisations. It can be obtained from Farrier House, Farrier Street, Worcester, price 10 pence plus postage.

Hereford and Worcester entered the Countryside Interpretation field just two years ago when Dick Capel, then a member of the Countryside Rangers service with previous experience in graphic design, was restyled Countryside Ranger/Interpreter.

His first project centred on Fish Hill Picnic Site just off the A44, east of Broadway in South East Worcestershire where he produced a self-guided walk with a big introductory map and six small display panels placed at intervals along a woodland trail. This proved to be a great success and he recently completed a similar trail with two big maps and sixteen small panels at Kingsford Country Park near Kinver in the north of the county.

Several large panels, mainly maps (mounted in wooden shelters constructed by John Frisby, the Kingsford Ranger) have also been installed at Queenswood Arboretum and Country Park near Leominster and Hartlebury Common Local Nature Reserve near Stourport.

All of these have been done by hand on Planika (a type of formica) mounted on plywood, using enamel paint or ink for the illustrations and letaset for the text. The artwork is given three coats of varnish and covered with "lexan" polycarbonate sheet which is sealed around the edges with a foam sealer tape and a silicone weather proofing sealant. Each panel is then clamped into a metal frame with fixing bars

Hereford & Worc.

secured by Allan screws which are concealed with putty painted to match the frame. The cost (excluding time) works out at about £23 for each small panel and £51 for the larger panels. One or two of the Fish Hill panels have let in a little moisture but this has been stopped with the addition of the foam tape which was introduced for subsequent panels, all of which have remained absolutely water-tight.

The Clent Hills Country Park, due to numerous access points, required a larger number of map panels and so eight were screen printed by a local sign maker. They were also encapsulated in resin but as they have been mounted in the same way as the hand painted panels and protected with Lexan due to their vulnerability to vandals, encapsulation is now regarded as an unnecessary extra expense.

Twenty-four county map panels based on the leaflet have since been screen printed on P.V.C. and these are being glazed and sealed with Lexan and installed in wooden shelters in country parks, picnic areas and various other sites throughout the county.

In the light of these and other interpretive activities, the County Council decided to appoint Dick to a new post of Interpretation Officer, so that he could devote all of his time to interpretation.

Future plans include the production of leaflets, two mobile exhibitions, a guided walks programme and more self-guided trails. Two assistants employed on the Manpower Services Commission work experience scheme are making three-dimensional models of the country parks and producing basic standardised signs based on the Forestry Commission's slatted 'ladder' boards.

17th century fun

RECREATING A SEVENTEENTH CENTURY COMMUNITY

"What was it really like in those days?" is surely a question that all Interpreters of Britain's History are

trying to answer in one way or another. The Practical History Society's non profit-making voluntary association of about 150 friends and friends of friends, attempts to do so by re-creating as accurately as possible, a particular community in a particular time and place. We have concentrated so far on rural communities of the Civil War Period, based on two privately-owned country houses - Doddington Hall near Lincoln and Kentwell Hall, Long Melford, Suffolk.

This is how we operate. A few months before the project is due to begin, representative teachers from schools within practical day-trip range of the house are invited to an explanatory "open day" there, and are invited to book an hour or more of project time. When each school party arrives, it is met by a guide who, like everyone else the children will see from now on, is in period costume and period role: neither he nor anyone else will use phrases like "in those days," or refer to any period after the one represented.

What the children then tour is a fully working community. We do not employ actors or scripts, and we have found that the only way to avoid the appearance of a show is to give everyone in the community a permanent role and a real job to do. Thus the butter made in plunger-churns in the dairy and the fifty loaves a day produced in the brick oven provide lunch for the 'lesser folk,' the charcoal-burner's handiwork goes to cook the gentry's dinner, and the soap boiled in an evil-smelling outhouse can be used by the braver souls to wash their linen. Permanent roles give the re-created community a life of its own: the dairy maids develop a genuine feud with the kitchen maids, the cook will not speak to the steward, and the haymakers mutter darkly against the bailiff.

Nor is anyone or anything - save the more fractious or escape-prone animals - behind ropes. Visitors can talk to whom they like and some at least can learn how to handle a breast-plough or pick up the rudiments of spinning. In return, they themselves may have to answer questions. What animal, for instance, produces the strange shiny material of their anoraks? What are



the strange little black boxes slung round their necks? Why are they not at work picking stones or scaring birds?

Inside the house the children can meet the apothecary in his sickroom, the cook in her kitchen, the instrument maker in his workshop, the chaplain in his schoolroom and the gentry in their parlour. There the talk is often of politics - domestic, local and national - and newspapers are much quoted: in 1978 we produced and distributed copies of those printed during the same week in 1645.

Two items, predictably, proved a sure-fire success. One was the militia men's cannon, the focus of a lecture on seventeenth century gunnery which culminated in a roaring discharge and a cloud of smoke. The other was the farm animals: Tamworth pigs, Lincoln Red cows, Lincoln Longwool or the very rare Norfolk Horn sheep, breeds chosen as the nearest available approximations to the seventeenth-century stock of the area.

The practical History Society has so far mounted three week-long operations. The first, at Doddington Hall in May 1977, was conceived as part of Heritage Education Year, and inaugurated the

Doddington Schools Project, subsequently the winner of a Sandford Prize for Heritage Education. Some 2000 children from about 40 schools visited between Monday and Friday and on Saturday afternoon and Sunday the project was open to the public.

"By popular demand" a second operation was mounted at Doddington in July 1978, when another 2000 children from roughly the same set of schools attended. This was immediately followed by the project at Kentwell Hall, where over 4000 children and 2500 members of the public attended.

All the projects were financially self-supporting. The cost per week varied between £1000 and £1500, being made up of publicity, secretarial and travelling expenses, the purchase, hire and transport of equipment and animals, and the provisioning of members who were not otherwise paid. The initial outlay was met by the house owners, and recouped by a levy on visitors: at Doddington in 1977 and 1978 children were charged 40p and 60p respectively, and at Kentwell £1. The last, conceived by the sponsors as a commercial venture, made a total profit of over £3500, part of which went to the PHS for the purchase of replica period

17th Century fun

equipment.

After a year's respite in 1979, we are now casting about for sites to mount projects in 1980 and 1981. While we are at present best equipped to represent the mid-seventeenth century, many members would relish a change of scene, particular favourites being the early Tudor and late Victorian periods.

Our basic requirements are:

1. Accommodation for members. A pleasant camp-site near the operational area, with some covered accommodation, toilets and access to hot water - though excessive bathing is not encouraged!
2. An initial outlay of around £1500, in return for first call on gate-money and the major share of any profits.
3. An organisation willing to deal with publicity and bookings.

Any suggestions or comments will be gratefully received by the writer of this article, Dr Charles Kightly, 2 Bootham Grange, Bootham, York, who will be pleased to send free copies of the facsimile newspaper, in return for postage.

Amazed

Although I've long been an ardent fan of science fiction, I never thought of it as something that could be even remotely connected with museum work. Recent events have, however, modified my views on the subject and indeed today I encountered a robot, several mutants, a mad professor and even trod the ground of a devastated future earth - all right here in my own museum. And none of it had anything to do with Asimov or even Smirnoff.

The explanation for these unusual encounters is fairly simple. In common with many museums, the Booth Museum of Natural History in Brighton, runs a children's club. The purpose of the set-up is to stimulate interest in natural history and conservation by

means of a variety of activities. Our organisers discovered at the local arts centre a "Play Resources Unit" which had organised a rather unusual children's activity called a 'Maze.' This consisted of a series of interconnected enclosures populated by 'actors.' The children were led in at one end and accompanied by a guide journeyed through a make believe, somewhat Tolkeinesque, world, acting out a story and overcoming a series of challenges. The basic story line was a quest for the recovery of three swords in order that good could triumph over evil.

Ever on the look out for new ideas, our organisers approached the Unit and discussions took place. The Unit consisted of some otherwise jobless people, none of whom conformed even approximately to the popular image of the kind of person one would normally expect to find working in a museum - and that says quite a lot! However, it soon became obvious that they were not only enthusiastic but also know exactly what they were doing. Two galleries of the museum were closed off and in them the new "maze" was constructed. Construction materials were cheap but effective, acres of black polythene, packing cases, parts of redundant domestic appliances and lots of other recycled junk.

Although this project need not have taken place in a museum, because it did, we felt it important to use as many 'real' objects as possible in the scene setting. In the circumstances this proved difficult since a devastated earth would hardly support the kind of fauna represented in the average museum collection. However, it was possible to use some of the more bizarre specimens for atmospheric effect and in general the presence of the 'real thing' seems to have helped. The maximum size of any group using the maze had to be limited to 15. This was partly because of space limitations and partly because there was a need to establish rapport between the actors and the children.

To describe the actual operation it is perhaps best to outline the scenario. It should, however, be pointed out that there are certain limitations with this type of project. In the first place it only appeals to a limited age range

(we specified 8-12), younger children find it too scary and do not participate and older children tend to be too cynical and do not get involved in the story. The second constraint is that the message has to be sufficiently simple that the children can work out enough of it for themselves for the whole thing to be self-propelled, in this way they lead themselves through the 'maze' without the necessity for too much input from the 'actors.'

The children assemble at the entrance to the maze, being told that they are about to travel through time in a special vehicle and that they will have to wear opaque hoods for this journey. They then enter the vehicle (actually the entrance to one of the galleries) and the doors close behind them. To the accompaniment of various sound effects the journey takes place and they arrive (not having actually moved - although several swore that they felt the whole thing moving). They then crawl through a short passage-way and emerge in a dark chamber under the earth which contains deep-frozen survivors of the human race. Here their guide explains that the surface of the earth has been devastated by the indiscriminate dumping of nuclear waste and is populated by mutants and robots. Their task, they are told, is to gather the ingredients necessary for the re-establishment of plant life on the surface; that they will be given certain clues as to what they need, and will encounter certain dangers on their travels. They then set off on the quest which takes them through radioactive swamps, lifeless deserts and in the process are attacked by androids and mutants. En route they collect pure water, mineral salts, soil and seeds. In the final scene they deliver these to a safe place from which regeneration can begin, but not before the guide turns traitor, reveals that he is an android in disguise, and nearly foils the whole scheme. Before the children are allowed to leave the 'maze' and return to their own time, they are given a stern warning about the need for environmental conservation. Or else.....!

The story, one can see, leaves a lot to be desired in terms of scientific

accuracy but does contain some basic truths which seem to have been got across successfully.

And now that it is nearly over, what are the results - was the two weeks disruption of normal routine worth it? On the whole I think the answer must be yes. No-one can argue that the medium was totally effective but there again, to my knowledge, it is the first time this sort of 'theatrical' approach has been tried in a natural history museum context and no doubt it could be refined and its impact improved. The most direct benefit to the public, and to the museum (and in these days we all need to justify our existence), is that a large number of children visited a museum and had an enjoyable, novel experience which, we hope, will mean that they return (bringing their parents with them) to experience (in not such a phrenetic manner) even more of the goodies. Finally, the publicity we received as a result was first class; all the local papers, including a full photo-spread in the major county weekly, local radio and if it hadn't been for that damned Athina B upstaging us, we would have had a spot on Southern TV.

Charles Steele

Professional ?

A MATTER OF INTERPRETATION

Interesting light has been shed in recent months on the professional status of interpreters and on the attitudes of those who seek to employ them. At the autumn seminar of SIBH, 'Making Interpretation More Effective', two of the three speakers expressed the desire to be saved from the 'professional interpreter'. Conversely, Terry Stevens in his very interesting article in the autumn issue of 'Interpretation' gave details from his pilot survey seeming to indicate that employers actually wanted specific members of their staffs to possess the types of interpretative skills which only academic training could give. As if to resolve the dichotomy, Tom Danton, quoted in the same issue, urged all professional interpreters to remain amateur in spirit. Perhaps now is the time to pause and ask ourselves just

Professional?

what we mean by the term 'professional interpreter' and whether it is not merely a piece of fashionable jargon.

We, as members of the human race, are all interpreters on some level. If we pick up a leaf and declare it to be from the sycamore tree, we are applying our deductive powers to an object and expressing what we believe to be true, but if we then wish to receive a salary for working with sycamore leaves, do we become professional interpreters or 'professional botanists'? This ought to depend upon our training and qualifications, and a study of the situation vacant columns will reveal that employers usually require trained botanists to tend and research plant life; trained geologists to classify rocks; trained archaeologists to dig historic sites, and so on. This probably demonstrates a reasonable degree of rationality on the part of employers, in that they are seeking a person with expert knowledge for work demanding specialist skills.

There is, however, a vast difference between being knowledgeable on a subject, and being able to convey that knowledge in a meaningful way to the average layman. If, therefore, the primary aim of the employer is to appoint someone to convey knowledge about botany, geology or history, he must advertise for a trained interpreter. Yet few employers in the world of museums and country parks when doing just this stress the importance of communication skills, and knowledge of psychology, sociology or anthropology. It is not generally the case that qualifications in these subjects are specifically asked for, rather that apart from a 'relevant degree' some knowledge of them 'would be an advantage.'

Training in these subjects is of vital importance, for the interpreter, regardless of the concept he is aiming to convey, is dealing primarily with the human brain. He must know how much information the brain can reasonably process at one time; he must understand attention-spans; know the subconscious effects of colour; be able to co-ordinate spatial, textural and audio stimuli, together with many more in a

way that will keep the visitor at ease, interested and informed. Training for these skills is not, contrary to the opinions of Terry Stevens' sample, hard to find; it is readily available in universities and polytechnics throughout Britain.

The interpreter, of course needs material with which to work. He must have facts about sycamore leaves; stalactites; potsherds, or whatever is relevant to the specific work situation. This he gets from colleagues with the appropriate specialist knowledge; so the specialist in, for example, botany, will provide botanical information and the specialist interpreter will present it to the visitor. Close co-operation is of vital importance, as is confidence in the abilities of colleagues. This is the point at which problems arise, for the social scientist, it seems, must constantly fight for the legitimacy of his profession when surrounded by colleagues in the arts and natural sciences jealously clinging on to their Samian ware and sycamore leaves.

Some employers are now beginning to discover the value to their teams of the trained interpreter, but many still wait to be convinced. So perhaps now is the time to tighten up our definition of the word 'interpreter' and accept that whilst the botanist and historian are trained to 'know about', the interpreter is trained to 'tell about' - and he can.

Margaret Mitchell

Letter

Dear Madam

At the discussion meeting on 8th December, Colin Ward spoke in support of the statement by Andrew Faulds MP that was reproduced from *The Times* in SIBH Newsletter Three (Spring 1976), under the title "The Ancient Assets that may be our Salvation." This was very welcome, for what Faulds has to say surely is vitally relevant to the aims and objectives of this Society. Urging a national policy of preserving and developing our historic and artistic heritage, he makes the point: "We

must be far-seeing enough to accept that our future may be... a sort of Switzerland with monuments in place of mountains."

This raises the question of how far can interpretation be realistically considered in isolation from all the other processes which are applied, or should be applied, to the historic heritage - identification, research, conservation, promotion, management. It is not unnatural that those who are concerned with interpretation in their official capacities should study projects which are already in operation in particular places, or should give attention to such details as the amount of time that is spent by an average visitor (English-speaking) in looking at a particular piece of flatwork; but should there not be more attention paid to wider issues, to what might be done for developing the heritage on a nationwide scale that is now only partially being done or not at all?

Faulds' message may be summarised by saying that the heritage is, quite apart from its cultural value, an economic asset which will have to be extensively but wisely used in a post-industrial society. It will need sound and progressive management, which also of course would provide the right context for the best possible interpretation. Would the Society be able to see itself as a pressure group for urging the message on central government?

Yours faithfully

Frank Cottrill

Interpret Offices

FROM THE DESK OF THE PAST

Britain's Commercial Heritage

In recent years, considerable attention has been given to conserving aspects of our industrial heritage. There are the museums on a grand scale, such as Ironbridge in Shropshire and Durham's Beamish and on a smaller scale, such as Abbeydale at Sheffield and the Gladstone Pottery Museum in Stoke upon Trent. Farming, fishing, mining and

quarrying all are the subject of their own museums.

A part of our working past that seems to have received scant notice, however, is 'the office'. Not only did Britain lead the Industrial Revolution and become, too, in some eyes, a nation of shopkeepers, but is also developed a unique 'commercial' expertise.

On the one hand was the growth of the institutions - banking, insurance, shipping and broking - and on the other, the increasing scope of both national and local government bureaucracies.

In parallel, our factories and warehouses, large shops and other trading operations built up their administrative functions, employing many thousands to work at desks and tables in the endless pursuit of paper.

An Office Museum

Many 'theme' museums have preserved small areas illustrating administrative work, but nowhere, as far as this writer knows, is there a museum or kindred institution devoted to 'the office'. When one considers how many people have been and still are employed in offices, then there must be a case for displaying the development of what might be called the 'office environment' and its ever-changing nature, both in terms of systems and of mechanical and other aids.

The 'office' can be dated back to the times of the scribes, and probably earlier. In this country, a round thousand years might be a good starting point with the clerics - the original clerks - playing a major role.

As times passed we had the recollection of Pepys and the perceptive pen of Dickens to illustrate aspects of work at the desk. The more recent the period, the better the documentation on paper, film and tape.

Familiarity Breeds Contempt

Offices may be supporting functions to an enterprise - the accounts section, the post room, the drawing office, the ordering/dispatching area, the print room, the wages office - or self-sufficient operations such as banks,

Interpret Offices

building societies, insurance companies, professional chambers, newspaper offices, local authorities and the civil service. Everyone knows an office when he sees it. Perhaps this familiarity has bred a certain contempt.

Offices and office practice have undergone constant change as new procedures and new equipment have made their mark. The development is as long and as wide as from the brush on parchment to the light pen on the visual display unit. As each era routs its predecessor, so a way of life of many clerks and managers is consigned to history.

The telephone, the typewriter, then its electric successor, the telex, the duplicator, the photocopier and the offset-litho have all changed office routines considerably. So too have the aids to counting from the abacus to the electronic calculator. But it is in recent years that the changes have become increasingly rapid, whether it is the computer in the accounting functions, the micro-fiche reader in the stock room or the word processor in the typing centre.

Foot in the Door

And now that the microprocessor has its foot firmly in the door, a new revolution is taking place involving virtually all conventional office activities and linking them for example to production or stockholding. Not only are present procedures being changed beyond the recognition of a generation ago, but the introduction of the 'chip' is demanding a new breed of office-workers skilled in handling and interpreting information rather than handling and processing paper.

People in offices are - and are likely to remain - very important. But as their roles have changed, so have they. Titles have taken on different meanings - secretary is a good example - and women have taken over from men in many areas. The undemonstrative inoffensive office worker has now a choice of formidable unions to join and is flexing his political muscles like his industrial fellow worker.

Glories and Horrors

Before it is too late to capture some of the past glories, and horrors, of the 'manual' office, to conserve them for future generations to wonder at as we marvel at the pre-mechanised crafts, there should be established, probably in a major commercial city, some kind of 'Museum of the Office'. (Although the word 'museum' conjures up unfortunate images of many minds, a substitute is hard to find.)

It must not be a dead, 'glass showcase'. It should be a living, changing 'experience', marching in step with developments and relating them to each other and to practice in the past. It could encapsulate the simplest, supporting office activities as well as the complex and exciting commercial enterprises. It should clearly demonstrate the roles of the office and the office worker and bring about understanding of those roles as an integral part of Britain's industrial and commercial heritage.

It will be an interpreter for those many who see offices from the other side of the glass screen, or the counter, or the window onto the shop floor. It will explain the necessity of administrative functions and help unravel their complexities, particularly in the world of finance. It might explode a few myths and reveal a few secrets.

White-Collared Landmark

It would be encouraging, and necessary, to have strong support from those most involved - the major commercial institutions and trading companies, and from those with the keenest interest in changing the present order - the manufacturers and suppliers of office equipment of all kinds.

If such an enterprise were realised it would help to establish the much maligned white-collared employee as an important, and continuing landmark in the country's heritage. It would surely evoke as many memories from those who remember unsophisticated, labour intensive methods as perhaps surprise from those whose conditions

and apparatus are today a far cry from the high desk and stool, the steel pen and the ledger and the eye of the supervisor from the surveillance hatch in his inner sanctum.

The commercial pen is surely as mighty as the industrial sword.

Michael Glen

Travel

TRAVEL BROADENS THE MIND (Interpreted Properly)

While interpretation has been widely accepted in Britain over the last few years, there is a great lack of understanding of it in one industry - tourism. This is surprising because the very nature of it involved visitors, many of whom use the interpretive facilities of country parks, museums and stately homes. Tourism includes much of what interpreters are involved in, and as a major growth industry with great economic significance, it needs to examine any weaknesses carefully.

Yet few professionals in tourism know much about interpretation. Hardly mentioned in training, or trade journals, or operators' plans, it is omitted from discussion of the tourist product by most practitioners. Operators sell packages of transport, hotel and resort, but have too little interest after that in how their customers spend their holidays.

At least some people know better. The English Heritage Monitor (1) published by the English Tourist Board, records annually the tide of visitors flowing through stately homes, museums and gardens. Lord Parry, Chairman of the Wales Tourist Board, said recently (2) that holidays connected with 'heritage subjects' were increasing rapidly, "probably the most exciting development in tourism in Britain today." The Wales Board has played a large part in developing textile-craft centres, museums based on mining, iron-making and transport, and tours of industrial monuments. It's "Glimpse of the Past" booklet is one of the best of its kind of publication.

"Scottish Travel News" reported in December (3) on the success of "theme holidays" by saying "the trend is well advanced. People put as much effort into their leisure as their work, knowing they won't be laughed at if their lives revolve around, say, pottery or circular stone monuments." Some themes already developed in Scotland include archaeology, botany, fossil collecting, lighthouse visiting and stately homes haunted by ghosts. They all use interpretation.

One of the major cities to create a tourist industry 'without benefit of clergy - without cathedral or abbey, like most cities - is Stoke-on-Trent. Gladstone, Chatterly Whitfield, Wedgwoods and the new City Museum in Hanley conserve and interpret the history of Stoke to a growing number of visitors. There are urban trails and preserved monuments like Harecastle Tunnels and the Wedgwood Institute, and at least two operators run hotel-based weekends in the city with great success. Further, the Victoria Theatre often produces plays on local themes. We tend to forget that the theatre world was into interpretation long before we were.

People in the travel trade have not caught on to the importance of tourism as a message carrier: that, at its simplest, it can say "here is a beautiful beach, an historic town or attractive countryside." Publicity officers have long been happy to say "Skegness is So Bracing" and "Follow the Romans - come to Chester." Besides knowing that there is a Golden Mile in Blackpool, Lancashire people are now being tempted by advertising which informs them that St Helens is a glass-making centre, Bolton was the home of Samuel Crompton and the spinning mule, and Rainhill was the scene of the great Locomotive Trials.

We would realise that there is the germ of interpretation in this. Tourism professionals - operators, marketers, information officers - would not. They have nothing in their university or college courses on interpretation, virtually nothing in an otherwise good range of publications dealing with it. Yet whether only in advertising, or in guidebooks, visitor centres or where-

Travel

ever, they do use it. There is another impelling aspect, Tourism can behave like a mass medium.(5)

In the design and management of tourist attractions there is a creative process which aims at conveying either an explicit or an implicit message. There are producers, writers and designers setting out to influence thought and opinion. The media include the advertisement, guide book, park warden's talk, exhibition, audio-visual presentation and so on. Then it should follow that museums, art galleries, historic houses, zoos, country parks and nature reserves are also media. Each has its collecting and interpretation policy which select and present images, messages and opinions, just like the press and broadcasting or the cinema documentary. The producers are controllers whose viewpoints are partial, may be biased, aim at achieving a certain shift of opinion in their audiences.

There are plenty of good examples: The London Experience presents the England of the chocolate box picture; Iron-bridge the England of innovation and achievement in technology, in the design of things rather than the creation of human society. In stately homes the message concerns wealth and noblesse oblige.

With help from interpretation, the tourist industry being developed in a new area can help to revive the economy and foster the pride people have in their own past. It can say to the locals that they have an area worth visiting, to the industrialist that there is self-confidence, and this is done by telling visitors about the past, present and future of the place. It is happening in the Welsh valleys and the Staffordshire Potteries and it is beginning in West Yorkshire, where the new District of Calderdale is to use an interpretive programme for cultural development and tourism.(4)

In return, tourism can offer marketing and management expertise in the broad field. Finding the right interpretive product and marrying it to the right tourist market is essential. It is a continuing task involving regular pro-

motional work, which is where interpretation management begins. Half the battle of getting satisfied customers is in creating the right kind of anticipation and then fulfilling it exactly. This involves the whole of the content of the attraction, from travel directions and costs through the facilities, image, staff input, weather protection and so on, before the interpretation or display content is considered.

At the present time, a steam preservation project in the Midlands advertises itself by a photograph of its main station earlier this century, but the atmosphere and content are no longer the same and visitors can be very disappointed. A nature trail in the north of England has a booklet describing the butterflies to be seen: usually, of course, they won't be there, a point not made clear. The management shortcomings might contribute to the interpretive plan failing: galleries closed through staff shortages, audio-visual aids out of action, craft demonstrators times changed.

Tourism staff are visitor, or consumer orientated. They know the market, its needs and behaviour. The managers of attractions and the interpreters know about the product, its characteristics and its behaviour. There are the 'traditional' communicators such as journalists, film makers and theatre groups with well refined interpretive skills, which are missed out of most plans produced by our researchers. We should spend more time in consideration of the ephemeral interpretation of the event, piece of theatre or journalism. If these groups put their heads together more often, they might well hear something to their mutual advantage.

Alan Machin (Tourist Information Officer for Calderdale)

- 1 English Heritage Monitor 1979 ETB
- 2 Travel Trade Gazette, 8 Feb 80
- 3 Scottish Travel News, Winter 79 STB
- 4 Changing Calderdale: from the Tourism Society: 1979
- 5 People and Their Past, in Studies in Design, Education, Craft and Technology: Winter 1979

Viking York

INTERPRETING EXCAVATIONS

York Archaeological Trust was formed in 1972 to make an excavation team available in advance of a major ring road scheme, which threatened not only many of York's buildings but also extensive archaeological deposits. The Ring Road scheme was shelved, following very strong opposition, but the Trust lived on becoming one of the largest archaeological units with a staff of more than 30 specialists, including an Environmental Archaeology Laboratory, based at York University, and a conservation laboratory, currently being extended to undertake large-scale timber preservation.

The Trust has always included public relations and education as part of its work and, where safe access is possible, the sites are open to the public. Information, in the form of displays and newsheets are provided, and an education officer is available to speak in schools and to take guided tours around the sites.

In the last eight years, thousands of visitors have seen the excavation of the College of the Vicars Choral of York Minster, a section of fourth century defences, Roman buildings in the Praetentura of the fortress, the lost church of St-Helen-on-the-Walls, and many others, large and small. Entrance charges and donations have all helped to provide finance for the excavations.

Three years ago, with the likelihood of a major excavation of Viking York taking place, a long-term programme of fund-raising and public relations was established. Excavations over the last century suggested that the Coppergate/Castlegate area of York could provide much new information into the Viking period of York's history. A site, made available by the departure of Craven's sweet factory to the outskirts of York, became the focus of the Trust's energy. Removal of the Victorian cellar floors revealed almost immediately substantial remains of tenth century timber buildings and the Viking Kingdom of York was



revealed.

Eighteen months of excavation and public relations established the Coppergate site as a major tourist attraction with an international fund-raising appeal under the patronage of H.R.H. The Prince of Wales, Queen Margaretha of Denmark, Crown Prince Harald of Norway, King Carl Gustav of Sweden and H.E. The President of Iceland. Magnus Magnusson became a chairman of the appeal and a committee of industrialists, academics and others ensured widespread knowledge and credibility of the Trust's aims.

With the help and enthusiasm of a Lancashire businessman, the Trust set up a trading company, Cultural Resource Management Ltd., a move which preserved the Trust's charitable status; the Coppergate site was ideally suited for public access, with space for exhibition buildings and sales. A reconstruction Viking Faering, obtained from the National Maritime Museum, is on display in a 40' steel container, on loan from E.W.I. Ltd. A prefabricated building 40' x 20' was erected and contains an extensive exhibition, a tape-slide

Viking York

display, and a sales counter with books, replicas, posters, postcards and T-shirts, many of which were originated by the Trust. In a separate building are four models of the site; three show Viking, Medieval and Victorian reconstructions of the site and one model shows the interior of one of the Viking buildings which, from archaeological evidence, was a woodturner's workshop; bowls, cores, gouges and woodshavings were excavated. The models were commissioned originally for the Y.T.V. film 'The Viking Kingdom of York.' Listening posts around the site allow the director to give up-to-date information on the progress of excavations.

A continuous public relations project ensures that the Coppergate site gets plenty of visitors who, with their entry fees, purchases and donations help to finance the extremely expensive business of archaeological excavation. The combination of distinguished patronage, the tremendous interest of the site and the amount of publicity it attracts means that many firms will provide goods and services free or at cost and the Trust has benefitted enormously from firms large and small, local and international. A loan of £76,500 from the Anglo-Scandinavian Bank enabled the Trust to install steel shoring to allow a deep excavation to proceed.

The displays and models were all originated by the Trust's staff and designed to be as sturdy and as maintenance free as possible. All texts and graphics are dry-mounted and heatsealed onto ½" plywood: the display systems can be easily adapted to fit other areas when the Coppergate site finally closed late this year. A mail order sales scheme has been established, which can be extended or adapted to suit other excavations. The Trust's future plans include the establishment of a major Viking Museum as near to the Coppergate site as commercial considerations will allow.

Dick Raines, York Archaeological Trust



Styal

BRINGING THE INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION
BACK TO LIFE AT STYAL

Early water-powered cotton mills have rarely survived into the 1980's. None except Styal has survived complete with its industrial community surrounding it, intact in an unchanged landscape.

The potential of this site was appreciated by its owners, the National Trust, who in 1977 helped establish an independent Museum Trust at Styal, based in the mill at the bottom of the valley. Now the mill is coming back to life, and the Museum Trust is presenting an ever increasing range of opportunities for visiting groups to come face to face with the Industrial Revolution at Styal. The evidence is all around them - in the mill workers' village at Styal, the Apprentice House, the chapels, the manager's and master's house, and at the Mill itself.

Quarry Bank Mill stands in the wooded valley of the River Bollin, hidden from the surrounding farmlands. The large and handsome Georgian mill was built in this uninhabited valley to harness water power. It is still isolated and still an impressive monument to an entrepreneur who risked his merchant's capital in the new world of cotton spinning. The buildings show the various stages of expansion, but sadly all the machinery and interior fittings

were stripped. Even the water wheel was replaced in 1903 by turbines.

The Museum Trust has embarked on ambitious plans to fill these empty spaces with a new working Museum of the Industrial Revolution and its social and economic impact in the North West. A key element in this will be the restoration of a large iron wheel, which is to power weaving and spinning rooms as they might have been when the Mill was in its heyday.

To help visitors understand the processes of spinning and weaving - as well as the stages by which they were mechanised, demonstrations of hand spinning and weaving are regularly provided. The visitors are introduced to the subject through displays of fabrics and fibres which they are encouraged to feel, touch and distinguish.

Other Museum displays already open are devoted to the story of the domestic textile industry, early textile merchants, the harnessing of water power, the factory system, and the growth of the cotton industry in the 19th Century. The Gregs and their workforce are meanwhile brought to life by displays of documents and other relics. The story of how the Gregs recruited a workforce to their isolated mill, provided farm produce, accommodation, chapels and a shop, is related. The health of individual apprentices is monitored in a surviving record book of the factory doctor, their diet is described by an apprentice who ran away to see his mother, their working routine being dominated by the clock in the bell tower which still tolls on the hour.

The life style of the Greg family provides a series of contrasting displays. Like many cotton masters, they were widely read and travelled, well educated and humanitarian by the standards of their day. Their estates, home life, hobbies and pastimes are illustrated alongside the original Mill counting house and manager's office. The Manager's house stands on one side of the mill, the Greg's mansion on the other (but neither is open to visitors), distinct in style and scale. Halfway to the village stands the Apprentice

House, with its garden store sheds, the site of the playground for apprentices.

The village, founded and built by Samuel Greg to house his growing workforce, soon developed a life and individuality of its own. To this day, it is lived in by the many descendants of Greg's original workforce. The farm which he purchased in 1802, the old farming settlements like Farm Fold which he converted for his first generation of spinners, the rows of cottages built after 1820, with the school and chapels alongside, and the village shop standing in the middle, are all still in existence.

Life at Styal for Greg's workforce was - and remained - a strong contrast with the life of a mid Victorian town dwelling factory employee. To this day, it is one of the most attractive rural sites of historic interest in the North West, and one which is most appreciated by those who study, live or work in nearby towns and cities.

Scottish Agricultural Museum

The Scottish Agricultural Museum, in the Royal Highland Showground at Ingliston, 9 miles west of the centre of Edinburgh, is due to be finished internally by May 1980. The Museum is in two parts. The Workshop, the cost of which has been covered by Central Government funds, is now complete, and has been functioning for over a year. The Display Area has been financed by the Scottish Country Life Museums Trust, which has accumulated approximately £160,000 in the last few years, to finance the building. The Trust is at the moment about £12,000 short of its target, and is making what it hopes will be its final round of appeals to charitable bodies and to business interests.

Following the completion of the building works in May 1980, an exhibition entitled "God Speed the Plough" will be prepared for the Royal Highland Show in June. After the show, the displays in the galleries of the Agricultural Museum will be completed, in preparation for full-time opening.

Scottish Museum

Although the Museum is called the Scottish Agricultural Museum, it is not thought of as a place where the straight history of Agriculture may be studied, although this will be included too. Rather it is being seen as a centre for the interpretation of the countryside, in all its regional variety. Though not big, it will be possible by the use of audio-visual aids to bring into the museum material of relevance from both home and abroad, and the Scottish evidence will appear in its European, and even wider, perspectives.

It may be of interest to explain that the function of the Scottish Country Life Museums Trust has been to collect money for the building only. The Trust is not a body which can hold Museum objects, and its aim is to provide a focal point within which material from the country life collections of the National Museum of Antiquities of Scotland, or from other Museums, may be displayed.

Edale

A NEW EXHIBITION FOR EDALE

The Peak National Park operates three main Information Centres and four smaller Information Points. The Centre at Edale, in the heart of the national park and at the starting point of the Pennine Way, was built in 1967. It was intended to combine the functions of information Centre, camp site office, mountain rescue post, Ranger Service headquarters and lecture hall: an attractive idea, but one which had practical disadvantages when mountain rescue equipment was needed in the middle of a film show!

It was decided in 1979 to show films in the village hall rather than in the centre, and this immediately opened the way for a more elaborate exhibition than had previously been possible to stage in the main circulating area. The theme of the new display (completed - except for some additional material on natural history - in late 1979), is the Edale Valley and its immediate

surroundings. It deals more thoroughly than before with history, geology and natural history.

The content is split into six main subjects, one for each bay of the central structure, entitled: The Sands of Time (geology), Natural History on the Moors, Human History in the Valley, The Edale Farmer, Accent on Access (moorland history), and "The Edale Experience" (present day problems and national park involvement). The treatment of three of these subjects is reinforced with more basic and factual information on banks of small, hinged panels fixed to the wall opposite the appropriate bay. The actual area of display surfaces has been increased from 96 to 500 sq ft!



This description and the photograph can give only a limited idea of the full content of the new interpretive display - far better to come to Edale Information Centre and see for yourself - on any day of the year except Christmas Day and Boxing Day.

Andrew Greenwood
Information Officer, Peak National Park

Sound Archive

A REGIONAL SOUND ARCHIVE FOR THE NORTH-WEST

Traditionally archivists and historians, both amateur and professional, have concerned themselves almost exclusively with the collection, preservation and evaluation of the written records of the past. The availability since the early 1850's of the tape recorder has brought about new possibilities, making possible the systematic collection and use of ordinary people's memories as a source of information about the past.

Not only is it now possible to preserve the memories of those people, but also the language, dialect, traditional music, song and custom, as well as everyday sounds that we take for granted - such as the motor car and aeroplane. The implications to those involved in aspects of interpretation are obvious.

In 1972 a meeting was held at Radcliffe Public Library near Manchester, to discuss the possible use of tape recordings as sources of information. From the enthusiasm displayed at these early meetings it was obvious that there was a demand for a regional sound archive collection and with this in mind a Working Party was set up to establish such an Archive. The Archive came into being during the summer of 1979, being based initially at Manchester Polytechnic before moving to its present home at the Manchester Museum, University of Manchester.

The project is funded on a subscription basis mainly by local authorities in the north west, but there is also provision for personal membership at £3 per annum.

North West Sound Archive is an autonomous body and in its Constitution it sets out to 'make, collect and preserve sound and related visual recordings of the life, character, history and traditions of the North West, to make them available for use, and to encourage member organisations and individuals to do the same. To catalogue material and prepare a union

location list.' It is also the intention of NWSA to make as many cassette copies of recorded material available as possible for distribution through the public library, museum and public record offices to the general public etc.

The area covered by NWSA is Cumbria, Lancashire, Cheshire, Isle of Man, Greater Manchester, Merseyside, and the Peak of Derbyshire.

At present recordings are being processed, accessioned and catalogued at NWSA with long-term storage in mind. Recordings are dubbed onto low-print archival tape, the standard tape speed being 7½ inches per second. The cataloguing is being undertaken in association with Manchester Museum, the entries being fed into the University's computer in the regional computer centre. The advantages of using the computer are many, such as multi-copies of printouts of specific information or multi-copies of the catalogue. The system also allows a search to be made to discover significant words or phrases such as 'General Strike' or 'Isle of Man.' The computer will then print out details of all recordings which contain information on those headings.

One of the duties of the NWSA is to encourage sound recording, in particular oral history and with this in mind a number of seminars are being arranged in the north west. Anyone interested in learning about the techniques of oral history recording can obtain further information from NWSA about the seminars.

The NWSA is still at a formative stage in its development, but when it becomes operational it will have a rich collection of material relating to the north west offering new sources of information to aid interpretation.

Ken Howarth
Sound Archivist

Hancock Geology

A NEW GEOLOGY ROOM IN THE HANCOCK MUSEUM

Michael Rodd, presenter of "Tomorrow's World" on BBC TV, a local Tyneside boy, seemed the obvious choice as opener of the new set-up "Geology, yesterday's world" in spite of a protest from a professional colleague who thought it suggested that geology was out-of-date. Taking consolation in the fact that one can't win them all, we pressed on. The deed was done by Michael Rodd, in spite of being accused by the chairman of being employed by 'the other side' as master-mind of "The World About Us," and the astonished public have flooded in to enjoy this new geological sensation. That is something of an exaggeration, because until the adjoining room, currently being re-furnished, is complete, the visitor must creep in the back door. Way-marking from this back door to the start of the story has been achieved quite simply by painting a set of yellow size 12 footprints on the floor. We hope that we can get them off when the front doors are opened again.

The new presentation, very largely follows the orthodox approach used in many museums, but with one or two differences. Geology, because it demands the understanding by the visitor of a new set of concepts is, I believe, the most difficult, and yet the most exciting, subject to put over. Maybe the greatest barrier lies in the idea of time and space. It is all very well to display Carboniferous ripples alongside a photo of the local beach, but to fill in the time-gap and explain the hundreds of feet of overlying rock and still come up with a smiling customer is an altogether different matter. Similarly, the idea of the sun relating to the planets and the earth with its drifting continents and all that, leaves one breathless.

There is only one solution - toss the child a text book, and that's exactly what we did. First you clout him with a 5' fibreglass globe showing the scene when coal was being found in these parts, whizz him round the solar system

and sooth him (maybe) with a back-projected series of 24 artists' impressions of how the earth formed, all to the tune of Holst's "Planets." (Unlike a few we could mention, but won't, this one works, really quite reliably). He is then routed through a mini-maze of earth processes, earthquakes, volcanoes, the deep earth, not too much but just enough to soften him up for the REAL rough sandstone steps onto a mezzanine "deck." Here he follows the history of Northumbrian geology, chapter by chapter. It's all there, fossils and rocks, maps and diagrams with labels at three intellectual/dedication levels, the philosophy is clear, the bigger the point size, the shorter and fewer the words.

Visitor participation is always a good idea - in the earthquakes section, a wooden plan of the Californian coastline has a spring-loaded slice with grip-slot, pull it downwards and the result of lateral displacement is clearly demonstrated. Later in the series a similar device shows how the intrusion of quartz-dolerite (red painted plywood) created the whin-sill sandwich.

The tops of the cases in the mini-maze were finished off with plywood from the 'off-cuts' store, and from the gallery were a hackey sight. Various suggestions about filling and painting were rejected and then one evening David Attenborough, unwittingly and still not knowingly, planted the seed of the solution. Attenborough fans may recall a sequence in one of his "Life on Earth" programmes of the footprints of dinosaurs in an Australian river-bed. A splendid, fossilised drama of a big carnivorous dinosaur scattering a herd of smaller peace-loving herbivorous dinosaurs as it sought a meal. In short, we reconstructed the scene - in plastics various, under a thin skin of sand. Susan Turner, our resident geologist, who had master-minded the whole gallery was "into dinosaurs" and produced the brief. The finished product is not wholly spoof and certainly does a far better job on the messy plywood patchwork than polyfilla and several coats of paint.

After the main palaeogeography, a short spiral step-way returns from the

carpetted chipboard of the deck to polished oak (1884 vintage) planks and the reality of the Ice Age. The reverse side of the planetary merry-go-round carries a modified version of the well-tried 24 hours equal 3,300 million years time-scale, what-happened-when.

All of this takes up about one half of the available 100ft x 40ft floor space. In the other 50ft x 40ft was talked about the nuts and bolts of geology, about rocks, fossils and minerals, their detailed origin and significance, about oil, rock, building stones, and geology as a hobby. If the story of the geology of Northumbria had, in any way, switched you on, you could read all about it for the rest of the day, and why not?



Ice Well

THE ICE WELL AT HIGH ELMS

High Elms, Kent, was the home of Sir John Lubbock, the first Lord Avebury, and the instigator of Bank Holidays and Ancient Monuments. His mansion has been destroyed by fire and his estate is now a fine public open space, a responsibility of the London Borough of

Bromley. Stables and an ice well survived the fire.

I am the Countryside Officer of the Bromley and District Consumers' Group, a voluntary body very active in conservation. We needed a project for European Architectural Heritage Year 1975. The Borough Council agreed that we could conserve the ice well and make it available for public inspection. We cleared the well of a mass of accumulated junk. The Recreation Department of the Council repaired steps, put a hand rail and a safety chain; and we were in business.

In the days before refrigeration, many country houses had ice wells. Ice was collected from ponds in winter, and stored for domestic use in the summer. Ours is a particularly large and well-preserved survival of a once common feature. The literature is sparse. Presumably there was no point in writing essays about a common feature of domestic life.

The entrance is hidden in yews, apparently planted to cool the area by their transpiration. Steps lead steeply down to a curving passage. Suddenly there is the great domed chamber, some four metres across and seven metres deep. At the summit is the entry through which the ice was introduced; in the floor is a large drain for melt-water. An unusual feature of our well is a subsidiary chamber which we assume was used as a cold store for food. It is obviously of later date than the main chamber.

The whole structure is a magnificent example of the bricklayers' craft. We aim to open the well to the public three times a year. It's an exhausting operation which demands all the manpower we can muster. Only two parties of five can go underground at once to hear guides explain the well time and time again. Hundreds of people queue to see the well. I try to entertain them by explaining the principles of ice wells through a loud-hailer, and demonstrating dousing. There is a publications stall. We give soft drinks to the youngsters, since we cannot make a charge on Council property. A bucket collects welcome donations for our conservation work.

Ice Well

Almost no documentary evidence is available about the well, but we do know that Sir John Lubbock got a bill for repairing it in 1842.

For a leaflet about the ice well please send me 15p at 300 Baring Road, London SE12. We will open the well for organised parties by arrangement, and a donation of at least £5

Philip Daniell

The leaflet sent with this article gives details of other activities of the Bromley Group. These include producing a map of the local countryside, converting a rubbish dump into a picnic site, publishing Listed Buildings Walks to help people discover and appreciate their built environment, and guided walks.

Stonecrushing

A STONECRUSHER FOR STALYBRIDGE

The next item in Tameside's industrial monuments scheme is a Stonecrusher. The scheme envisages setting up of pieces of locally made machinery, in working order, as focal points for the nine towns which make up Tameside. The first item was an Ashton National Gas Engine, set up in Ashton shopping precinct nearly three years ago. The engine needs very little maintenance and is much appreciated as an alternative to the usual defunct fountains. It is also a way to show items of the museum collection which cannot be accommodated or displayed in restricted museum premises, and makes them very much available to the general public.

The Stonecrusher was used to crush and grade stone for use as roadstone. Catalogues and working instructions have been obtained and will be included in the display. Numerous suggestions have been made as to suitable matter for crushing!

Two further items are in the pipeline but progress is slow. Problems of street closures, siting of electricity meters,

and dovetailing of case building, work on the machine and its delivery and installation by crane all have to be coordinated. Finance is tight too as one scheme takes two thirds of the museum annual budget (after receipt of grant aid from the Science Museum and North Western Museum and Art Gallery Service) and applications to Urban Aid and the Council Lottery were unsuccessful. The greatest expense is the toughened glass of the display case, but this is essential for the security of the machine, and of course public safety.

Despite these gloomy aspects of the project a lot of interest has been shown in the town and by the local press, so that in another twelve months we hope to be stonecrushing in Stalybridge.

H C Caffrey

Ancient Exhibits

EXHIBITIONS AT ANCIENT MONUMENTS IN WALES

CAERPHILLY CASTLE, MID GLAMORGAN

Early last year, 5 listening posts were installed at different points throughout the castle as an aid to visitors' understanding of the site. During the summer a new exhibition, aimed at interpreting the history of the monument, was opened in the room above the outer gatehouse. Caerphilly, with its restored water defences, is one of the largest castles in the British Isles and the exhibition aims to illustrate the reasons for its building and uses models to show its stages of development. There is a section about medieval warfare and military organisation, including missiles of the period and a model of a trebuchet siege engine, as well as two audio programmes which describe human tragedies connected with the castle in the middle ages. The final section illustrates the nineteenth and twentieth century restoration of the ruins and the use made of them today both by schools and the local community.

An illustrated booklet is currently in preparation as a companion publication to the exhibition.

CAERNARFON CASTEL, GWYNEDD

Due to open here in May is a new exhibition about the Princes of Wales. This will replace the current display on the 1969 Investiture, which has been in the North East Tower for nearly ten years. The proposal is to look in some detail at selected early Princes, illustrating the origin of the emblem of ostrich feathers and so on, and to finish by two photographic retrospectives of the Investitures at the castle in 1911 and 1969.

The new exhibition will take its place in the castle together with the interpretive exhibition "A Prospect of Caernarfon," a display of arms and armour on loan from the Tower of London and the museum of the Royal Welch Fusiliers which occupies all three floors of the Queen's Tower.

RECONSTRUCTION DRAWINGS OF WELSH SITES

A joint exhibition is being prepared with the National Museum of Wales on the reconstruction paintings of Alan Sorrell RWS in Wales. The Ancient Monuments Branch holds 16 of these and the National Museum 12, and all are being brought together and displayed with photographs of the same viewpoint today. Entitled "Early Wales Recreated," it is due to open at the National Museum on 5th May and run for six weeks, before going to other locations in Wales. A catalogue is being produced to accompany the exhibition which, as well as describing the sites and pictures in detail, will assess Sorrell's contribution to the field of reconstruction and describe his connection with the National Museum of Wales and the Ancient Monuments Inspectorate.

Kimmeridge

FOCUS ON KIMMERIDGE

The Dorset Heritage Coast project, in conjunction with the Dorset Naturalists Trust, are refurbishing an old fisherman's hut to house an exhibition about the story of Kimmeridge.

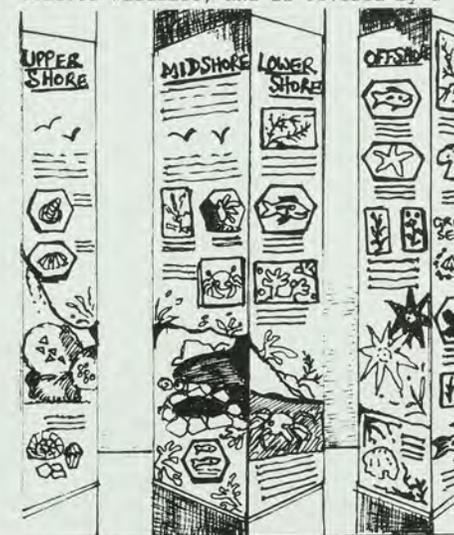
Already considerable work and research has been carried out on what is essentially a display about the locality

but which deals also with widely varying aspects of general interest as they relate to Kimmeridge - marine, human, biological, geological and historical.

The hut is immediately beside the sea - which has been known to invade the hut during storms - and consequently measures have been taken to render the whole exhibition damp proof and storm proof. The construction of the whole also takes into account the activities of an extremely small proportion (1 per 1,000 ?) of the visitors who might be potential vandals and all the artwork finishes also aim to meet this need. Printing is all in pigmented polyester resin paints on glass reinforced plastic surfaces and all exhibits will be covered in impact resistant materials.

The display can be split into two main sections. The first traces a brief history of Kimmeridge from geological times to the present day, placing special emphasis on photographs and other visual records of local people and events. In doing this the Heritage Coast team made special efforts to contact local people who could give first hand accounts of the the area's recent history.

The second section of the exhibition deals exclusively with marine or marine related wildlife, and is covered by a



Kimmeridge

large cross-section display spanning the cliff areas, upper, middle and lower shore, and finally the offshore region, thus illustrating where each kind of wildlife is found in a clearly graphic way. Help and encouragement for this section especially has been given by the Dorset Naturalists Trust who are the sponsors of the exhibition.

The wildlife section of our display aims to illustrate the unique nature of Kimmeridge as a rocky shore habitat, its character being largely determined by its geology and by its 'ledges' which shelter the bay and break the waves.

We hope that the exhibition in the hut contributes towards the campaign to conserve this part of the coastline and our local wildlife.

Jane Franklin
Virginia Rowland
(Dorset Heritage Coast)

Take Note!

SEVERN VALLEY RAILWAY TICKETS

Following our use of the Severn Valley Railway during the Church Stretton meeting in the autumn, the Society has acquired a limited number of 1st Class tickets for the return Bridgnorth/Bewdley journey on the Severn Valley Railway. Any member who might be able to make use of these when visiting the area is asked to contact Andrew Jenkinson at Bircher Cottage, Little Stretton (Tel. Church Stretton 0694 722223) who will be pleased to issue them at £3.00, the proceeds going into the Society's funds.

JENKINSON FOR PRIVATE PRACTICE ?

As a result of re-organisation of the adult education service in Shropshire, Andrew Jenkinson has lost the post in which he could exercise a largely interpretive role. He is therefore investigating the possibilities available in private practice. He is particularly interested in interpretive planning consultancy and in re-

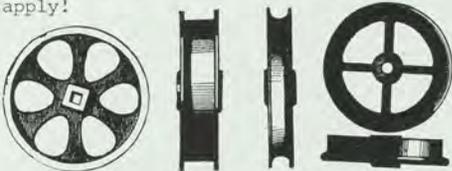
search and writing of interpretive texts for any medium, especially in the geology or natural history fields. He would be pleased to hear from any members who might have advice to pass on (like don't) or who could point any work in his direction. Contact at Bircher Cottage, Little Stretton, Church Stretton, Salop, SY6 6RE

HELP!

We have all heard of ranger-interpretors, but what about engineer-interpretors? The Llywernog silver-lead mine is proposing to create a new full-time post which will come under the general title of a Project Technical Officer. This is seen as being an essentially practical post in a developing museum with a currently small staffing ratio. Candidates need to be widely versed in basic mechanical engineering and general construction techniques whilst at the same time being able to assist with graphic design and interpretive duties.

Accommodation will be located in the vicinity of the Museum, which lies in the foothills of the Plynlimon Mountains of Central Wales.

If such a pioneering all-rounder exists then P.L. Harvey (15 Market Street, Aberaeron, Dyfed) will be pleased to forward further details to him or her. This is a challenging post in rather a unique museum located far from the madding crowd. Pure academics need not apply!



TRAVELLING FELLOW

Celia Smith of the British Tourist Authority has been awarded a Travelling Fellowship to study 'New Developments in Tourist Attractions.' Naturally, this subject demands detailed study of interpretation and conservation, especially at sites which attract the general public. If you can offer advice or suggestions of places which should be included in this research, please contact Celia at 150, Altmere Avenue, London E6 2BT.

DUNFERMLINE CARNEGIE

Hovering on the brink at recent SIBH Conferences have been representatives of the Carnegie Dunfermline Trust, an elder and slimmer - in the sense, that is, of less well-endowed - sister of the more familiar Carnegie United Kingdom Trust. As is implied by their respective titles, the Carnegie United Kingdom Trust is national in scope - the Carnegie Dunfermline Trust operates purely locally, in Andrew Carnegie's native town.

Seeing the fun enjoyed by people already splashing about in the translucent waters of interpretation, the Dunfermline Trustees have now decided at least to test the temperature for themselves by asking David Hayes, Director of Landmark, to prepare a report on interpretation possibilities in their historic Fife town. Let's hope his report, expected in the next few months, will encourage the Trustees to wade out further: perhaps it might even provide a springboard for a real plunge.

Was Andrew Carnegie himself an early advocate of interpretation? In his Autobiography (mainly dating from 1914) he wrote: 'Fortunate in my ancestors I was supremely so in my birthplace. Where one is born is very important, for different surroundings and traditions appeal to and stimulate different latent tendencies in the child.' Instancing the great medieval Abbey, the ruined Monastery and Royal Palace, Queen Margaret's Shrine and the ruins of King Malcolm's Tower, and the tombs of The Bruce, St Margaret, and the kings, queens and princes buried in the Abbey Churchyard, he described as 'Fortunate, indeed, the child who first sees the light in that romantic town.'

Fred Mann

WIRRAL RETIREMENT

Major White retired as Head Ranger of the Wirral Country Park at the end of last year. A successor has not yet been appointed.

DRINK FOR THOUGHT : INTERPRETIVE BEERMATS

Brains Beer is as much part of the character of Cardiff as the Arms Park, the Castle or the Civic Centre. Its pubs are nearly always lively places, full of hustle and bustle, where the stranger to the Welsh capital can usually see and meet the real Cardiffian as well as sampling a fair pint.

However, both the visitor and the local now have a further excuse to visit Brains pubs, thanks to an imaginative venture by S A Brains Ltd, over the last few years. The Brewers have been using one side of the beermats to feature aspects of Welsh life. Already series of beermats have been distributed covering Cardiff place names, Welsh castles, legendary Welsh characters and Welsh recipes. Now, following discussions with the Prince of Wales' Committee and the National Museum of Wales, a series of mats is to be published on the industrial history of South Wales. The first of these should be available by summer 1980 and will highlight dockland features in South Wales. The text of these mats will be written by Richard Keen of the National Museum. It is hoped that subsequent mats in this series will cover coalmining, steelmaking and transport in South Wales.

Obviously, the amount of space for text on a beermat is limited to a few essential facts on a particular feature, together with a suitable illustration. Nevertheless, the distribution of beermats is such that anyone involved with interpretation should seriously consider them as a further medium to get the message across. More people visit pubs than museums!

Peter Hind, Prince of Wales Committee

INTRODUCING ECONOMIC FORESTRY

Ann Cardan of the Economic Forestry Group has sent a colour introductory leaflet. She also sends an article which describes some of the Group's interpretive and conservation provision in south west Scotland.

The Group manages 15,000 hectares of land in Eskdale Muir, and employs a

Take Note!

wildlife manager. He and his staff work jointly on practical conservation and on education which they see as necessary to justify field sports, to offset impressions created by "arm-chair ecologists" and to create a better understanding of the forestry industry amongst local people.

The Interpretation Centre illustrates the management programme. For example, it shows that the number of voles (which kill young trees) can be reduced by killing carrion crow which in turn, enables the owl population to expand and eat more voles. The Centre counteracts the effect of what the Wildlife Manager describes as "Alice in Wonderland" TV programmes which create a clouded view of the need to cull wildlife.

One consequence of the controlled habitat has been the arrival in the last five years of several rare birds, such as the Golden Eagle and the Peregrine Falcon.

HERITAGE

This is the title of a new newsletter produced by the Adult Education Panel of the Heritage Education Group. The aim is to bring together information about what is going on in adult and further education to promote the study of the built environment. The first issue includes articles on conferences, courses, research on the educational value of printed literature from historic houses and book reviews. It is produced from the Department of Adult Education, Nottingham University.

ASHTON MEMORIAL, LANCASTER

The Lancaster Guardian reports that the City Council has approved a plan to provide a visitor and craft centre in the memorial. The proposals include an area for display of good quality craft-work, craft demonstrations, and a permanent exhibition on the upper floor depicting the history and natural heritage of the district. A catering service would be provided in the palm house. The putting green would be improved. Concerts, poetry reading and folk evenings are also proposed.

The memorial, set on a hill top in Williamson Park was designed by Sir John Belcher, and built during 1906-09 at a cost of £87,000. Lord Ashton (who as Sir Jones Williamson, developed the local linoleum industry) planned the building as a memorial to his first wife. In 1972 the Architect's Journal described the memorial as "perhaps the most extravagant, extraordinary and literally useless yet magnificent building in England, visible from most parts of Lancaster: the Taj Mahal of the North Country?"

CHESTER'S NEW EXHIBITION

A new exhibition in Chester Heritage Centre entitled 'Material Evidence' deals with changes in local building materials and styles throughout the centuries, from the earliest forms of timber framed and local red sandstone buildings, through the richly decorated timber framed buildings of the Tudor and Stuart period, to the late introduction of brick buildings to the area and the Victorian timber frame and mock timber frame 'black and white' revival. It also traces in some detail the development of local roofing materials.



PRINCE OF WALES MOVES

The Prince of Wales Committee has moved into new offices at Sophia Gardens, Cardiff, CF1 9LJ, tel. Cardiff 373600.

DERBYSHIRE GUIDED WALKS

The Derbyshire Historic Buildings Trust gives a guided walk around an historic town or village in Derbyshire on every second Sunday in the month starting at 2.30pm. The walks are guided by an expert who has researched into the area and an article is written about the walk and the history of the village or town in the monthly edition of the 'Derbyshire Life.' Anyone who does not receive a copy of 'Derbyshire Life' and wishes to know where the walks will be made, please contact Derek Latham, The Wood Latham Newton Partnership, Grosvenor Road, Ripley, Derbyshire.

AFAN ARGOED

West Glamorgan County Council and the Forestry Commission have produced a comprehensive guide to this country park in the Afan valley. It includes historical details, wildlife and the facilities of the park. It is well laid out and liberally illustrated, much of it in colour, and has a glossy cover.

The County Council are also running a programme of guided walks throughout the winter, including at least one bi-lingual one.

BROCKHOLE NEWS

Brockhole has taken the bold step of producing a much smaller (A5) showcard to publicise its facilities in 1980. Ron Sands, Assistant Director, hopes that, paradoxically, this will ensure greater publicity in the long term. "Over the years, display cards for stately homes, railways, wildlife parks etc. have become bigger and bigger. Hotel notice boards and information centre boards, already overcrowded, simply cannot cope: I hope others will follow suit," says Ron. "After all, it is better to have a small card that is seen, rather than a large card which simply gets covered over with yet larger posters; and a small card is cheaper!"

Ron sent in some other leaflets, including three examples of co-operation with other places in the area visited by tourists - one a joint

promotion leaflet, the other two poster guides to all the gardens open in Cumbria, and sites associated with Wordsworth. He also sent an example of co-operation with a local organisation - the YHA are to sponsor a film festival at Brockhole, with showings from May to November.

Courses

FREE TRAINING ?

Since January 1979 the "Rural Tourist Enterprises" course at Montgomery College, Newtown, Powys has provided a practical training for people wishing to begin, expand or improve tourist ventures in the countryside. Running for six full weeks, the course covers all the topics necessary: from the design and budgeting of a suitable project, and the obtaining of grants and loans; through the planning and legal requirements, and the crucial skills of marketing and publicity; to the development of real quality in reception, accommodation and traditional country catering.

To students coming from far afield, residence is offered at the College's own tourist venture, the Castell-y-dail hill farmhouse. More importantly, Castell-y-dail is also the teaching base for the course itself; and it is probably this unique feature - whereby students experience and participate critically in the operation and development of a working tourist business - which has given Rural Tourist Enterprises its national appeal and reputation.

The course is fully backed by the Manpower Services Commission, so fees, meals, travel and accommodation are paid for, and a good weekly allowance provided. As for qualifications, an applicant's realistic commercial ideas, energy and enthusiasm are far more important than success in passing exams.

Please contact either myself or Philip Brachi on Newtown 27444 for further information.

Raymond Youell - Lecturer

interpretation newsletter

Courses

EDUCATIONAL USE OF MUSEUMS ETC.

The short course - full title "The Educational use of Museums, ancient monuments and historic houses" - will take as its theme the investigation of the educational and interpretive aspects of visits to historical monuments, sites and houses and their inter-relationship with the educational use of museum collections. It will be held from 14th - 18th April 1980, in Cardiff, cost £70. Application form TT15 from DES, Elizabeth House, York Road, London SE1 7PH.

THE FARMER AND THE TEACHER

Subtitled "the farm as an educational resource" this conference will take place at Staffordshire College of Agriculture, Rodbaston, Penkridge, Staffordshire, on 11th-13th April. The purpose is to assemble teachers and farmers, and to explore ways in which the two groups can co-operate in order to help children learn about the countryside.

PLANNING FOR LEISURE

A two year evening post-graduate course, this leads to a CNA diploma. Its aims are to explore ways to cut across the traditional department structures of government in order to plan for leisure activities, to teach a broad range of skills so that students will be prepared to adapt to changing requirements, and to provide a clear academic framework within which the problems of planning for leisure can be formulated and related to everyday practice. Elements of the course include lectures, field visits and a 10,000 word individual project. For further information write to Course Tutor, Planning for Leisure, Department of Geography, The Polytechnic of North London, The Marlborough Building, 383 Holloway Road, London N7 0RN.

MARITIME MUSEUMS SYMPOSIUM

This will take place on 17th - 19th October at Plas Tan-y-Bwlch, Maentwrog, Gwynedd. The theme is "Conservation, Preservation and Interpretation," with papers and tour of sites. The fee including coach tour is £50. Further details from Richard Keen, Welsh Industrial and Maritime Museum, Cathays Park, Cardiff, CF1 3NP.



FARM OPEN DAYS - WORKSHOP 1980

A feature of the Farm Open Days programme this year will be the promotion of regional demonstration events throughout England and Wales.

These workshops, which will include a reception and feedback session, will offer the opportunity for invited guests to attend an event for the public and also to hear from the Organisers themselves how it was planned and arranged.

Particular attention will be paid to the interpretive philosophy and techniques that have been developed over the seven years of the Countryside Commission's sponsorship, which help to make Farm Open Days such a success.

Readers of Interpretation are invited to apply for an invitation to the workshop in their region by writing to:

Bruce Macgregor
Project Officer
Association of Agriculture
Victoria Chambers
16/20 Strutton Ground
London SW1P 2HP

Families will be welcome.