

interpretation

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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.

Subscriptions

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The Newsletter

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Viewpoint: Tomorrow's Heritage

A few years back not many of us would have foreseen that a gasworks would become the subject of a conservation campaign, or that the Department of the Environment would designate a chain of colliery tips as ancient monuments. Kenneth Hudson showed us the gasworks in his recent TV documentary The Electric Revolution. The tips are near Bishop Auckland, and are joined in their new status as "a museum of the area's industrial past" by a disused quarry. Durham County Council wanted to extract coal from the tips, thus painlessly financing their removal, and to fill in the quarry with waste. To judge by the newspaper quotes they for once had the support of local people. But Hudson got the Chronicle cameras roving round factories on the Great West Road, some derelict film studios and the inside of Battersea Power Station to such effect that one was left wondering whether anything these days should be thrown away.

One apparently universal law operating to affect our judgement on the matter is of course the fascination of scarcity which decrees that while lots of something are not individually interesting, one of a kind is. Another is the beauty of obsolescence by which the new-fangled is usually dubbed ugly, but after the period of its greatest practical use is over is newly appreciated for its appearance. A third law might be termed the comprehensibility of old technology. This infelicitous expression is an attempt to encapsulate the apparent truth that while new technologies are a mystery - and often a disturbing one - to their contemporary humans, subsequent generations casually pick up their rudiments as a hobby or on a day out. (It remains to be seen whether obsolete micro chips will engender the same enthusiasm as steam engines now do.)

Typically, heritage conservation policies are too little too late - witness the flurry of activity after the bulldozing of the art deco Firestone factory. The three 'laws' of conservation guarantee that much, and often the best, is lost before a conservation need is perceived. One hope for improvement lies in 'anticipatory conservation' by which tomorrow's heritage is identified earlier. Another lies in the sensible distribution of conservation efforts within and between different regions. Is it claiming too much to suggest that the environmental interpreter is best placed to grapple with these tasks and to explain to the public just why the presently unremarked may yet fascinate future generations? AF

Home Farm, Tatton

Peter Neate

Tatton Park was originally the family estate of the late Lord Egerton. On his death in 1958 it passed to the National Trust. It is financed and managed by Cheshire County Council on a peppercorn rent.

What makes Tatton special and helps attract over half a million visitors annually is its representativeness and completeness. Now that the Old Hall is open we are able to show the growth from a humble Anglo-Saxon homestead, through the ages developing into a great country estate complete with Georgian mansion, ornamental gardens and magnificent deer park. The missing component has been the home farm. With the recent surrender of tenancy we are now able to open the farm to the public. We propose a limited opening later this year with a view to opening for the full season in 1982.

The interpretive aim is to show the role of the home farm and estate yard in the life of Tatton set in the late 'thirties. As far as we know this is a unique aim and nowhere else in the Country is this the primary goal. The buildings are Victorian, built of brick and slate and are particularly well suited for this purpose. The last main building is dated 1938. Not only did the farm feed the

mansion but the estate yard serviced the outlying farms of what was then an extensive private estate. We intend to authenticate with Tatton wherever possible using livestock known to have been associated with the farm. Initially this may not prove wholly practical and other older breeds may have to be substituted. The buildings and yards will be restored to their use in this period with the exception of two rooms of the estate office and part of a covered yard. The former are needed to provide toilets and the latter will be converted into a reception area with some minor internal alterations. Display panels will be simple, pictorial with minimum copy. The aim will be to whet the appetite. The reception area will be manned and admission charges will be made. Generally, the tour will be self-guided with the aid of a leaflet but guided tours will be available for educational and other special parties. Though the leaflet will identify buildings, equipment and their uses, some unobtrusive information panels and way-signing arrows will be necessary. These will be kept to the minimum. The objective will be to encourage visitors to search for the past and absorb the atmosphere of living and working farm of a bygone era.

The farm is set some way from the car parks. Visitors will be able to walk through fields holding stock and past plots demonstrating crop rotation. Eventually it will be possible to see these being cultivated by both horse-drawn and early mechanically powered equipment.

The picture on the front cover of this issue of Interpretation shows the display area at Home Farm, Tatton.

Why Interpretation?

BRIAN GOODEY

Reader in Urban Design
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The term 'Interpretation' as applied to the conserved and natural environments has now achieved some recognition in Britain with books, incipient training courses and a professional association providing the necessary buttresses for an idea in increasingly good currency. In a Working Paper produced at Oxford Polytechnic three years ago I explored some of the issues surrounding this increasing interest in 'interpretation' and I do not want to repeat these points today. Rather, I want to outline some basic questions which have, if anything, become more obscure with the passage of time. 'Why Interpretation?' is a starting point and a question which will, I hope, crop up throughout the course as we focus on particular techniques or contexts for interpretation.

I believe that it is important to consider the question before it is too late - before set ideas and patterned responses dominate the field, before interesting ideas ... and possibly fundamental understandings ... get lopped off the trunk in an attempt to present a well-formed, and fundable, field of activity which will attract public and private finance, students, publishers, visitors and friends.

1. INTERPRETATIONS OF INTERPRETATION

The American literature from which many of us have drawn support is so small that established definitions have been grasped like liferafts in a sea. The gospel according to Tilden has achieved that function in a surprisingly short time. However enjoyable, stimulating, evocative and pioneering it may be, there is room to doubt whether Tilden's book was intended to be,

and should be, the only word on the subject of 'interpretation'. Linguists, literary critics, plastic artists, musicians and others have all made the term their own and their particular contributions are hardly recognised in a study which derives from the natural environment of North Carolina

From the neglected uses of the term, we can perhaps cull the following understandings of interpretation:

- i) Interpretation involves the personal re-statement of an observed or provided theme

The concept has always been closely tied to the creativity and interests of the individual who brings to a previously 'known' theme particular ideas and characteristics which stem from personal training, background and values. We expect such interpretation in concertos or in the rendition of a popular song - the BBC TV film on the song My Way is a reminder of this point from popular culture. The emphasis is on the individual communicating a personal view of a theme, the public knowledge of which may be great or small. Judgements as to the quality of such interpretation may be codified but are seldom able to escape the fact that the presentation is from a personal viewpoint.

- ii) The potential of a theme to suggest a variety of interpretations enhances its worth to society.

The film recording interpretations of My Way hinted at this - a theme which permits easy access by Lord George Brown and Johnny Rotten must be strong and have intrinsic qualities which place it well above the average Tin Pan Alley penning. Views, townscapes, human relations and situations have achieved the same strength which allows a wide variety of interpretations. The receiver can both identify with the ground of the theme,

and appreciate the individual interpretation and the facets thus revealed. There is a security in the former which allows the experiment and adventure of the latter.

iii) Interpretation therefore encourages multi-valency

To take a term from music, interpretation requires 'different readings' of the basic score. It follows therefore that the score provides the opportunity for a range of such readings. The composer will be, at least partially, aware of these opportunities. The term 'multi-valency' is of some current interest in architecture where it has been suggested that buildings, too, should be capable of a variety of interpretations. There are obvious limits here, for a building is intended to fulfil a basic human need, that of shelter (more basic than aesthetic needs), and few of us would want to be continually challenged with the necessity of understanding a radically new interpretation of the home before satisfying basic needs. Nevertheless, the need to create themes capable of a range of interpretations is, I believe, basic to the human need for stimulus ... but for stimulus within a known framework of security.

iv) Interpretation demands understanding

To see two Post-Impressionist interpretations of the same scene, to hear two versions of Stan Kenton's 'Artistry in Rhythm' recorded twenty years apart, to view two 'mental maps' of their home area sketched by children in the same class... each of these juxtapositions demands our understanding. Receiving interpretations from others demands that we, too, interpret both the basic theme and these received works. We are thus drawn into the process

of understanding the basic theme.

v) Interpretation demands creativity

To take this further, I believe that the process of understanding can provide the necessary stimulus for creativity, for the articulation of our own interpretation. This is obviously a regular feature of most conversation; attitudes and values are introduced in order to present our own view of the theme ... talking is easy and the most obvious form of individual creativity. Most other modes of expression seem to have barriers which, to many, become insuperable at an early age. Consider, for example, the cartoon image of a member of the 'general public' in a modern art exhibition, 'I could do better than that, it's just a load of scribbles.' But few of these stereotyped viewers do put pen to paper, interpreting through line or word their view of a provided theme. Society has seemingly marked out some performers for this role and the lines are firmly drawn.

2. LESSONS TO BE LEARNED

Where does this rather superficial set of observations fit with the rich fare of town trails, plans, and equipment on the ground which is about to be laid before us? Haven't I somehow mixed up these interesting, but essentially academic questions, with a stirring professional development which is more concerned with budgets, management and the media? The answer is 'yes'... and for very good reason.

I am not convinced that the professional activity of 'Interpretation' has ever been founded in a concern for the individual, and if this is the case, then it is a matter which I believe deserves some attention.

Environmental Interpretation in Britain has developed from a rapid coalescence of ideas and opportunities. I have outlined these in detail else-

where, but they include

- i) the need to justify investment in both urban and rural conservation,
- ii) the need to manage visitors,
- iii) the need to link conserved sites to the needs of the formal education process,
- iv) an enchantment with the more complex products of the audio-visual industry,
- v) the satisfaction of producing guidance notes for others, and
- vi) the need to rationalise public investment at a time of economic decline.

To these local forces we might add the excitement of discovering a well-developed field of activity in the United States and the desire of international bodies, such as the Council of Europe, to surround their activities with a panoply of publications and enduring ideas.

From this coalescence, which I have personally found most stimulating and relevant to my own teaching and research, we have already established a pattern-book of concepts, equipment and... I fear .. interpretations, which may be conveniently inserted into an increasing number of situations. Seldom is the rationale for interpretation considered, instead there are trails, plans, markers and programmes which can be organised, in the pious hope that management and financial return will be facilitated, and possibly that an educational experience will result.

My own involvement with town trails has been most instructive in this respect. As I have noted elsewhere, the town trail movement expanded very rapidly from a base in environmental education, through European Architectural Heritage Year, to the counter of nearly every public library and museum in the country. Committees were formed, collections established, trails promoted, and pattern-books written. It would be easy to say that in the pattern-books which I produced there were always caveats as to use, always

the point that preparing the trail was itself an important experience of understanding, of interpretation. But these caveats were usually ignored and I should have realised that they would be. Town trails have thus become a predictable experience for the casual user, they highlight historical associations, building details and something of urban evolution but seldom stimulate the eye or the mind. We can still number on one hand those trails which lead the user to discover the social condition of a place, which invite the user to interpret the basic theme rather than offer a civic amenity interpretation which, whilst more decorative and attractive than the observations of Pevsner, is seldom more stimulating to the unconverted user.

By concentrating on the media, rather than the message, I believe that we are in danger of debasing some of the original intentions of interpretation as presented by our American colleagues, and we have certainly failed to reconsider the meanings of the term in the British, or European, context.

3. ENDING ON A POSITIVE NOTE

It is not as though the more fundamental understanding of interpretation which I propose is hidden from view. Visit the large city museum and during the school vacation you can see well-designed childrens' programmes in action, encouraging children to contact and interpret the collection of artifacts. Environmental education at the street and city level has provided many techniques and approaches, the aim of which is to endorse the validity of the individual child's experience of place. Town trails by and for children are very different from the Amenity Society variety, a fact recognised when I was not allowed to include school-produced trails in the second edition of the British Tourist Authority list of trails!

I began by asking 'Why Interpretation' and I believe that it is useful to recognise that we, as a particular society, need 'Interpretation' - here seen as Environmental

Interpretation - for a number of reasons ... the compatibility of which is currently in considerable doubt.

- i) We need Environmental Interpretation because it provides a readily available opportunity to stimulate individual development and creativity.
- ii) We need Environmental Interpretation in order to manage, and justify investment in, conserved environments.
- iii) We need Environmental Interpretation as a profit-making industry which, given our paucity of resources

in other areas, may be one of the few 'growth' industries in Britain's future.

- iv) We need Environmental Interpretation as a formalised programme to ensure that a valued environmental heritage is guaranteed persistence in our national culture.

These seem to me to be four very different reasons for supporting the idea of 'Interpretation', they require different political lobbies, different financial arrangements, differential investments in media and in human resources, different patterns of semi-professional and professional growth.

WESTON SUPER MARE INTERPRETATION STUDY Philip Beisly

The project was begun on 27th April, following confirmation of the grant from the Carnegie United Kingdom Trust. During May the English Tourist Board has confirmed its grant to the project, and the M.S.C. Youth Opportunities Programme team which will, in part, provide some back-up for the study has been established.

The project was announced at the Civic Society's Annual General Meeting held on 27th April, and press notices were sent out. The local paper gave the project good coverage. In addition, a circular about the project was sent to all interested bodies, many with covering letters.

The project has been well received, and so far all those to whom I have been able to talk have indicated support.

Much of the first month was spent contacting other bodies and discussing the project with them. This provided a fuller picture of the level of current provision, and of planned provision, as well as revealing some of the constraints within which any new ideas must be conceived for example, the limitations regard-

ing certain 'sensitive' sites in the area.

I have pursued discussions with various officers and elected members of Woodspring District Council; the National Trust Regional Office and the National Trust Woodspring Centre; the Mendip Society; the Somerset Trust for Nature Conservation; the Victorian Society; the Countryside Commission; the Uphill Society; the West Country Tourist Board; the Managing Director of Birnbeck Pier; the Weston Archaeological and Natural History Society; and interested individuals. Some further meetings are arranged for the coming month.

An unlooked for offer of help has come from the Bristol University School of Architecture. It is doubtful if the kind of project work suggested can be helpful within the life of the project, although the advice of academic staff on certain aspects will certainly be useful. No doubt assistance of the kind offered will be useful in the longer term after the study is complete. I have begun to approach the business of a systematic 'stocktaking' of the area, and expect to have this phase of the study completed within the next month, now that the 'area of study' has been agreed by all concerned.

Conference Report

SPRING CONFERENCE 1981: INTERPRETATION AND THE COMMUNITY, MANCHESTER

Terry Robinson

While much of England disappeared under a thick blanket of April snow, the Society was in session in Manchester considering the role of local communities both as collaborators in interpretive work and as target audiences for schemes.

In countryside interpretation, the area around Manchester has been conspicuous in directing its efforts towards services for the local community. Jonathan Hall, at one time of the Civic Trust for the North West, and Duncan McIlroy, Chief Warden of the Tame Valley opened the conference by explaining how a programme of comparatively costly environmental improvements in one of Manchester's river valleys were emphasised to the local community by a programme of promotional and interpretive effort to increase interest in and use of the local area. Mr Hall provided the conceptual background while Mr McIlroy fascinated members with some of the ideas he had put into practice for gathering local support and involvement.

David Rhodes of the Manchester Heritage Trust then introduced us briefly to the Castlefield District of Manchester. It would be hard to predict the result of a vote among the participants as to what they found most impressive, the subject matter or the assured enthusiasm of our guide. Resisting the dubious attractions offered us by the rude cinemas along Oxford Road, we made our way on foot to Castlefield, where the cold drizzle failed to douse our interest in the stories we were told of the roman fort and township, the complex concentration of canal activity, the coming of the passenger railway and the social history carried in the buildings and streets. Liverpool Road Station and the site of the Peterloo Massacre were both outstand-

ing but did not overshadow the case for giving serious thought to the interpretation of the area as a whole. The puzzled looks we received from passers-by suggested that attempts to convince anyone that there is something special about this derelict area face an uphill climb.

In the evening, Tony Fyson presented a paper on the role of the Centre for Environmental Interpretation, our hosts for the conference, and what had been achieved so far. A short discussion revealed the need to explore further the plainly numerous opportunities for cooperation between the Society and the Centre.

On Saturday we took to wheels and set off for the rural charm of Warrington, (which did have a Russian feel to it, climatically), where we first visited the educational nature reserve at Risley Moss. Members were impressed by the standards of design and presentation in the new visitor centre and in the exhibition. The main points for discussion were the necessity to identify exactly who facilities such as this will be serving. Members were concerned at how far this approach would be suited to the needs of the large resident population that will soon be living close to the Moss. Ian Parkin told us how, in presenting the residents of the New Town with a showplace of very high environmental standards, the Authority is counting on this leading to the adoption of high standards for the whole of the countryside around Warrington.

A different approach was witnessed when we visited the ranger's cabin at Birchwood District Park. Here we learned of the activities rangers organise to get them into contact with local people and give an opportunity to interest them in the countryside.

Lunch was taken on the motorway, (in a moving bus) and we arrived at the North West Museum of Inland Navigation at Ellesmere Port. We were ushered aboard ship to be rudely buffeted by the wind off the Mersey while the Museum's Director, Tony Hirst, gave us an informative talk on the Museum's subject, boats. Members who could stand the cold were then able to stroll around the site and see some of the impressive work which has been done by



Canal at Castlefield, Manchester

Photo: Terry Robinson

volunteers. Those who boarded some of the boats found the volunteer staff on board keen to share their knowledge and understanding.

Asking the right questions could lead to lessons on how to start the huge Bolinder engine on a tunnel tug or how to cook breakfast in the tiny cabin of a narrow boat. It was good to see staff who had grasped the ability to approach visitors without being overbearing. Other parts of the site such as the warehouses and the hydraulic pumphouse were open to view but there was a general impression that in majoring on boats, the Museum was missing a chance to tell a much bigger story about Ellesmere Port itself, a town with its origins entirely based in the canal.

The Society seems to be developing a name for whimsicality and members of that bent enjoyed sitting under the main runway at Manchester Airport, less than 100 minutes after sitting on the canal at Ellesmere Port. The need to do so occurred during the rapid retreat up the motorway from the windy Wirral coast to the sheltered valley of the Bollin at Styal. Here we were quickly introduced by David Sekers to

Quarry Bank Mill, a developing textile museum. Not only the highly significant and valuable Mill buildings remain here, but also an intact industrial village. We were asked to consider how such a unit could be available for public scrutiny when the majority of the residents made their living outside Styal and wanted to live normal twentieth century lives there. It is a problem that will have to be reduced gently but in the meantime, the displays in the Mill, the preparations for the installation of a replacement water wheel and the ability to view the village and the Apprentice House are fascinating. An interesting discussion arose around the manner in which the way of life of the apprentices is portrayed. The usual division of opinion occurred between those who found the picture a rosy one, and those who were not prepared to judge the harshness or past life by today's standards.

The Mill building itself has for many years been silent. The clap and rumble of power looms has immediately and dramatically enhanced the atmosphere. Watching a loom being operated was made many times more meaningful

through another clever piece of presentation. When the machine was acquired from a mill in East Lancashire, that was closing down, it was possible to persuade the operator to come to Styal and work it. We have preserved then not only a machine but the human skills and attitudes associated with it. It was refreshing in a museum to see the operator stop work sharp at five o'clock, having until that time been entirely engrossed in the skilled job of keeping the machine running. It looks as though Styal is on the way to preserving not only machines and structures but a way of life.

A photograph in the Apprentice House of an outing to Belle Vue Zoo reminded us that they are still pulling Manchester down so we soon took to the coach again and sped back to see if the Town Hall was still intact. Indeed it was and we were given a warm and generous welcome by the Lord Mayor

and Lady Mayoress and some of the members of the City Council. We were also able to view the building that has been called a Civic Cathedral, including the set of murals by Ford Madox Brown of aspects of the City's history.

Sunday was taken up with a discussion raised by the lectures and visits on theme of Interpretation and the Community and this was followed by the Annual General Meeting of the Society.

It was good to see fifty members of the Society come to Manchester and play such a full part in a stimulating and interesting conference. Thanks must go to the local organisers, Gill Binks, Tony Fyson and Doreen Boardman of the Centre for Environmental Interpretation for running a conference that has dispelled any worries that the Society has no future.



Housing at Styal village

Photo: Terry Robinson

The Centre for Environmental Interpretation

Anthony Fyson, Head of Centre

Paper given at the SIBH Conference at Manchester Polytechnic, April, 1981.

Ladies and Gentlemen, I want to tell you a little about how far we have got in establishing the new Centre for Environmental Interpretation here at Manchester Polytechnic, and to hear from you later on about where you think our priorities should lie.

1. The formative period

As you may know the Carnegie United Kingdom Trust is supporting the Centre in its formative period. The Trust's interest in the field goes back a number of years and is subsumed within its Heritage grants programme, which evolved from previous museums and countryside programmes. The initiative which led to the establishment of the Centre began in January 1977 with the formation of a Study Group aiming to produce a statement of basic principles of interpretation and to analyse the need for training in this activity. It is gratifying to see a number of those involved in that working party here today. In studying training needs and the development of interpretation they devised a questionnaire which was circulated to Area Museums Councils and selected local authorities. Most replies came from Planning and Recreation Services departments.

The working party was able to conclude, from a fairly limited response, that there is an unsatisfied demand for short in-service training courses. A smaller sub-group considered the various training options in more detail, and also suggested that an advisory element could be built into any Unit involved in setting up training courses. It was thought that the advisory role might be inhibited if the Unit were to be located within a formal educational institution, but in the event this element has been strongly represented in plans for the

Centre here at the Polytechnic.

Publicity literature produced in March 1980 when the Centre was inaugurated, though before staff were appointed, summarised the Centre's aims as the promotion of interpretation through the development of both its philosophy and techniques. Information on these themes was to be disseminated in a programme of activity comprised of five elements: the organisation of conferences and publications; visits to other events and organisations, nationwide; the provision of advice to local authorities and others; the acceptance of consultancy work of a pioneering nature; and finally the setting up of short training courses.

The first thing this wide initial brief does is to establish that the Centre for Environmental Interpretation - or "C.E.I." as we must learn to call it - is not an academic ivory tower. Following the intentions of most good Polytechnics, it is outward looking and seeks to provide a service to the community, in this case not by links with commerce and manufacturing industry but by support for a growing element within what may be loosely called the leisure industry, and particularly, if not exclusively, that part of that industry which is serviced by public statutory bodies and voluntary organisations. Public enterprise may in some quarters currently be equated with sin: all the more reason for those of us with responsibilities in this sector of the economy to present a convincing case for the continuation of our work.

I think it would be useful at this juncture to say something about the experience which Gill Binks and I brought to the Centre when we first read the publicity literature and started work in the autumn of last year. I am a teacher by training, with a degree in Geography and two years experience in a local authority planning department. For nine and a half years, prior to coming to Manchester, I had been in the Environmental Education Unit at the Town and Country Planning Association. Gill had for some six years been a research officer at the Dartington Amenity Research Trust and is also a Geography graduate with a teacher training qualification. While the

emphasis of Gill's work in the past has been on countryside matters mine has been mainly urban, a complementarity which we think is important given the breadth of interpretive work.

I should also add, though by no means incidentally, that we are both founder-members of this Society. I am sure that the continuation of a membership organisation is a vital element in the promotion of interpretation as an idea whose hour has come. While a low membership may be a problem in terms of finance and organisation, I have no doubt that it is from a nucleus of collaborating individuals that the real impetus for innovation in our field arises. It has always been clear to me that our new Centre should serve as best it can the interests of the Society's membership, since by doing so it will be promoting the interests of Interpretation.

2. First steps

Naturally in view of my years with a national environmental pressure group, I was pleased to see the diversity of tasks to which the CEI was expected to turn its hand. Our broad remit has enabled us to advance on all the five fronts designated while considering how best to frame a definitive statement of goals. Conferences and publications have seen most of our collaboration with SIBH: this event is our first full scale conference, and we have accepted the invitation to edit the Society's newsletter (May I say in passing that this only succeeds as a publication if members make the effort to write for it. Please send in articles and news at any time. Do not wait for the announcement of a deadline, or even a begging letter from the editor). We have undertaken a number of visits to other organisations, some of which we have formally joined, and our meeting and seminar room has been used on occasion by them. We have provided advice and comment on interpretive schemes, and have undertaken a consultancy task for the English Tourist Board.

There are, finally, two short courses in prospect for this year - one sponsored by the Countryside Commission on audio visual aids in countryside

interpretation, and another, less certain as yet, for volunteer officers of amenity societies. This conference and the two courses will, we hope, provide us with the experience on which to base a full programme of short courses during the calendar year 1982. It would be wise however, to sound a note of caution on the matter of short course provision. While there is a latent demand for them from the bodies circulated by the working group, there is no doubt that current financial restraints are likely to have an adverse influence on the numbers participating. Furthermore the Centre faces costs of course provision reflecting, at least in the matters of residential accommodation and catering, a city centre level of charge higher than might be incurred at a rural location. And while thinking of other course-providing venues, I should mention that it is not our intention to duplicate the existing provision of interpretation-related courses such as they are. We will test the idea of providing courses and seminars at a distance from Manchester, but we envisage the development of the Centre as the resource base best suited to hosting such events. Indeed, if it does not become such a focus it will not merit its status as a national centre.

It is necessary that our nationwide remit be borne in mind if we are not to be regarded as just another small element within the country's largest Polytechnic. Nevertheless no unit within an institute of higher education can or should ignore the educational setting it finds itself part of. Hence we help supervise environmental project work undertaken by students, and shall be teaching interpretation options within certain new degree and post graduate courses presently being prepared. It would be a strange thing, too, if an essentially environmental brief were not to be underpinned by involvement with the local Manchester environment, rich as it is in interpretation opportunities. We have thus collaborated with the local planning and education departments and with the Manchester Heritage Trust, and expect this area of work to expand in the future, providing us with valuable first hand material to illustrate the training courses and

so on.

3. Refining our goals

You may have perceived, in what I have said so far, that in our first months we have not elected to define the balance which we have to strike between course provision and the multiplicity of tasks which a national Centre for Environmental Interpretation might be expected to perform. This is partly because of efforts on other fronts. Partly, too, it is due to the considerable financial uncertainty our host institution, the Manchester Polytechnic, presently faces. There is an obligation on us to attempt to earn money, which means undertaking profitable consultancy work wherever possible, and making charges for courses which more nearly reflect their true cost.

Nevertheless, we have now got some measure of the task before us, and are prepared to suggest some general goals for the Centre, along with a shopping list of more particular objectives which we consider will help us towards our goals.

First, we have the over-riding task of presenting a coherent account of environmental interpretation to both academic and professional interests. The field our work covers needs sharper definition and sustained publicity. The Carnegie Trust's most recent report remarks that environmental interpretation "as a new art and science does of course receive criticism, usually from a lack of understanding". The Trust's support for the Centre has in a sense bought thinking time, and a chance for us to distil arguments which when disseminated will help establish interpretation's credentials. Our objective is a polemical statement providing a rationale for environmental interpretation and showing how, as a field of activity and knowledge, it has a place in both the practical world of visitor satisfaction and the theoretical world of study. A related objective must be to identify those agencies and individuals to which our message should be addressed and to ensure it reaches them. A final objective here is to publish regularly by means of books, periodicals (either our own or others) and occasional papers.

Our second goal must be the establishment and maintenance of a resource base concentrating information about present practice in environmental interpretation and records of theory and practice. We aim to establish a library, and to trawl interpreting agencies for documentation of present practice. There is no single centre at present where anything like full records are kept of interpretation schemes in both town and country. Of course, to maintain such a comprehensive resource base and archive may prove beyond our means: selection may be necessary, though to be representative such a selection can only be based upon some knowledge of the total picture. A fairly conventional research programme may be needed to establish what is happening at a national or even international level. The development of such a programme would be appropriate within the Polytechnic's research based Institute of Advanced Studies (where the Centre is located) because the Institute, like environmental interpretation is multi-disciplinary in character.

Third, we have to provide the educational base where courses of study help introduce would-be and existing practitioners of environmental interpretation to the purposes, theory and techniques of interpretation. Our objective is a programme of short courses for in-service personnel. Some may attempt an overview of interpretation, others concentrate upon selected technical aspects. In the first instance they will be geared to the needs of one of four categories of individual - to senior, middle and junior staff of local authorities or other agencies and to members of voluntary organisations. Also as I mentioned earlier we are resolved to offer an interpretation element within existing courses at the Polytechnic and elsewhere, when we are invited to.

Another objective under consideration is the establishment of a new long course - either full or part time - which might provide a comprehensive pre-service introduction to our field of concern. We are aware that such a long course with, presumably, a degree or diploma awarded on its successful completion, would raise awkward questions about the status of the

interpreter as a specially trained individual having at his disposal a unique body of knowledge and skills qualifying him for employment ahead of others. Instinctively I sympathise with the sentiments of my former colleague Colin Ward who when addressing the Society's London meeting in 1979 remarked that he did not believe in a 'profession' of interpretation and disliked the notion of an orthodoxy being imposed on our activities. On the other hand I wonder if our understandable resistance to this trend is not based on an inner conservatism which fears the arrival of a new generation of young interpreters with instant expertise. I suspect that most people here learnt their interpretation through years of trial and error helped by a few seminal texts. Could it be that our researches will actually reveal the existence of largely unstated orthodoxies in environmental interpretation which the arrival of a generation of trained Young Turks might cause to be overthrown? It is a question we can discuss. I don't have a firm opinion on it as yet other than to observe that it is probably not the existence of training courses that matters, but rather what they train people to do.

Our next general goal is to focus upon policy issues relating to environmental interpretation, providing a stimulus to government and other agencies, sometimes from a base of well researched information and sometimes more speculatively. This seems to me to be an aspiration well in line with a Polytechnic's hope of relating its work to the community's needs. Our objective will be a series of policy or 'position' papers focussing on specific issues. We shall not have CEI policies as such, but would hope to become a publishing outlet for anyone who wishes to promote a set of conclusions and recommendations on an environmental interpretation theme. We would look for good research and/or well argued opinion. The Centre itself will have no vested interest in the opinions expressed, though Gill and I might well wish to give support to some ideas which may thus emerge and may indeed write our own policy papers. The papers in this series will be sporadic and signed by their authors. They could indeed start as contributions to the journal

Interpretation or be summarised for inclusion in it.

This brings me to the fifth of our general goals, which is to support the SIBH. It would be presumptuous to pre-empt discussion by announcing objectives in this connection before hearing your views. However it does seem to me that there are various problems in running a small society like this which could to some extent be overcome if a secretariat were to be available to it. But before you jump at the chance of shuffling all the donkey work off on to us, I had better say that there is only a very limited amount our Centre can do without being paid for it in view of the short time we have to get ourselves into a more secure financial position.

There is overlap between CEI and SIBH interests on many of the aims and objectives I have drawn up. I regard this as desirable, as it shows we have plenty of room for collaboration on questions relating to interpretation. But we would find it difficult to support SIBH by concealed subsidy on Society operations or by putting our unpaid efforts into establishing the Society on a more substantial financial footing. You may well conclude that as we are at this meeting attempting something of a relaunch of the society and have a new constitution to approve that now is not the time to come to far-reaching decisions about SIBH/CEI cooperation. We are to be asked to approve the amended constitution and certain new directions for the Society at the AGM on Sunday morning. These include SIBH/CEI collaboration. You may therefore be content to leave to the executive committee the details of how that mutual assistance is worked out. But it would be useful to hear general comments.

Our next goal is scarcely less problematic than the last. We aim to provide advice and comments on interpretive schemes. The problems arise on a number of counts. We shall, in effect, act as consultants to certain projects, and are caught between our desire to give what modest assistance we can and our need to charge for our services, and if to charge, then to charge only at commercial rates lest we undercut those who depend for their liveli-

hood on consultancy contracts. There may be good reason for distinguishing between voluntary bodies requiring free help and other concerns which should pay. Case by case it turns out to be harder than we imagined to distinguish the two, but a rule of thumb will surely have to be devised. Neither is it easy to decide where to help. We have the problem common to many voluntary bodies of not knowing whether to wait and act on requests from others or to set out to stimulate activity on our own account without reference to expressed demand. The dilemma is between 'responding' and 'initiating' and in the end no doubt a compromise must be struck between the two.

A useful objective to set ourselves in connection with this goal might well be to devise a detailed check list of criteria against which any interpretive scheme may be judged. It is also to be hoped that a proportion of our time may be devoted to the development of innovatory schemes based on new ideas worth testing and - if successful - disseminating. We would find it easier to devote time to schemes if they are reasonably accessible to Manchester. Local schemes would also give an opportunity to place Polytechnic project and research students on them, to the benefit we trust of both scheme and student.

4. Extending the bounds

These first six goals then, with the attendant objectives I have briefly outlined, may be seen as giving the CEI the chance to establish itself by drawing upon expertise both within Manchester Polytechnic and outside it. We are fortunate in the contacts and friends we have been able to use in this formative period. It seems that there are areas of skill - for example in the use of communication media and in design - that we shall draw on increasingly in the future. They might indeed in time become the focus of specific goals for the Centre.

But for the present we shall be likely to limit ourselves to two further goals. They both take us outside the conventional bounds of environmental interpretation work but, I hope you will agree, they are of con-

siderable importance to the long term development of our subject.

We aim first, to develop the relationship between environmental interpretation and environmental education. Interpretation is of course serving the informal education of a voluntary participant. Environmental education on the other hand is focussed upon the developing curriculum in the formal sector of education, serving a largely involuntary audience. Yet there is a significant overlap of interest which we feel should be developed. Our objectives here concentrate on planning interpretive facilities for dual use. We would like to establish how interpretive programmes can be designed to switch easily between formal and informal use. We need to find out whether and how environmental learning achieved at school is carried forward into adult life and how adult learning can build upon what is learnt at school. And at a more practical and mercenary level we need to explore the possibilities of funds for interpretive facilities being spent from education budgets. It is clear that such spending will only occur where there is benefit in the environmental education sense.

The last of our general goals focusses upon the environment as much as upon its interpretation. It has long been apparent that the interests of environmental planners in the informal environmental education sector, resulting from the recent development of public participation programmes, converge with those of the interpretation lobby. Both are concerned to attract the voluntary public, hold their attention, create a learning situation and as a result stimulate the imagination in some way. Our object is to show each local authority planning department that a plan for environmental interpretation within its area is in the interests of planning. The increased understanding of environmental conservation and development which will result should help make statutory participation programmes more successful than they have been so far. I say 'should' but readily admit that this is an article of faith rather than a proven fact.

5. Summary

To summarise then, I have outlined a

series of objectives to help us achieve eight major goals which, put briefly, are to develop the rationale of interpretation, to establish a resource base, to provide training courses, to focus on policy, to support SIBH, to offer a consultative service, and to examine and develop the relationship of interpretation to environmental education and to environmental planning.

You will note that at present we do not put forward research as a separate category. This is because we do not regard research as an end in itself but as a means to an end. It may be one of the tools employed in the endeavour to achieve any or all of our goals. It may also be that in time our training function will emerge as our dominant activity and we shall become, in effect, a teaching organisation which also has seven other ancillary goals. At present however, we judge that the take up of short course places is likely to be slower than in pre-recession times. To put all our eggs in the course provision basket would be unwise and in any case we are sure that our

teaching will be that much more worthwhile if it is related to the real world via the other endeavours I have outlined.

It will be apparent from what I have said that our small unit must rely, at least in its formative years, on the goodwill and assistance of many people if we are to progress on all the fronts I have identified. I hope you all feel able to agree with our goals and think that their achievement will benefit the growth of the environmental interpretation movement as a whole. As with all the most effective appeals for assistance, my request for support is addressed to you on the assumption that you believe a positive response would serve your self-interest as well as your altruism. Your interest in us may take many forms including writing for us, speaking for us, coming on our courses or sending staff and feeding us information on your activities. We hope you will find the support we can give in return to be worthwhile. Perhaps the process of mutual aid can now begin with your comments on what I have said this evening.

MUSEUMS ASSOCIATION INFORMATION SHEETS

The Museum Association, publishers of the museological quarterly, Museums Journal and the monthly Museums Bulletin, also publishes a series of Information Sheets giving very useful practical advice on a wide variety of subjects.

How to design and run a museum shop is dealt with in the Museum Shops Information Sheet and how to set up Linked Tape and Slide Audio-Visual Displays and arrange lectures (The Arranging of Lectures) in others.

Working parties of experts from the museum world and outside have produced Sheets on Museum Security and Insurance (An Approach to Museum Insurance) and the potential minefield of copy right law is explained simply in Copyright Law concerning Works of Art, Photographs and the Written and Spoken Word.

Conservation is the subject of several of the Information Sheets - Conservation and Museum Lighting and Simple Control and Measurement of Relative Humidity in Museums, both by Garry Thomson and Linda Bullock of the National Gallery, give valuable advice and include lists of manufacturers of the specialist equipment and materials needed. From Useful Addresses for Museum Curators you can find out where to buy anything from alarm systems to ultra-violet filters.

The Information Sheets are available as a set for a special price of £10 or can be brought separately. A complete list with prices, may be obtained from the Association. Orders, accompanied with the appropriate payment please, should be sent to the Museums Association, 34 Bloomsbury Way, London WC1A 2SF.

A British Genius

A BRITISH GENIUS OR VOLUNTARY ACTIVITY IN INTERPRETATION

Graham Taylor, Countryside Commission

The conservation movement was founded on voluntary societies. Compared to other social and educational activity the voluntary sector has never become subsidiary to the public service. It looks now as though it is set to expand and diversify compared to central and local government. The reasons are several but a questioning of the role of government and the need for economy in the public sector are the latest trends. The huge public interest in our heritage and a desire to get involved in a practical way, with our environment has of course been apparent for many years.

Politicians are placing greater emphasis on the role of the voluntary sector. What should this be? The voluntary sector is very varied and offers the public sector several quite different services. How should each sector regard the other, and what types of relationship are appropriate for collaboration of volunteers with public bodies? Can the voluntary sector substitute for action in the public sector and should we expect it to?

Hetero Genius (Sic)

Public authorities are becoming skilled in the use of voluntary labour to undertake selected practical conservation tasks, and also in the use of part-time rangers and interpreters. Keeping the volunteer conservator contented is a skilled job but not impossible, especially if the local conservation corps provides the esprit de corps, leadership and continuity. But voluntary bodies offer much more than this, for example they may be:-

expert bodies which can offer opinion, information and advice. These include the Council for the Protection of Rural England, the County Conservation Trusts and so on; they may also be:

managing agencies which own, lease or

act as agents for other, including public bodies to manager sites or services. These include Civic Trusts, archaeological trusts and others;

entrepreneurs who, on behalf of their members and the general public, establish and manage major recreation projects. These include the Arkwright Society, Ironbridge Gorge Museum Trust and many others.

These may be mass membership bodies or tiny groups of people; they may have huge cash income and permanent staff or neither; they may act as lobbyists and pressure group or be quite tame. And because they are impermanent, liable to change and not publicly accountable, public bodies are wary of them, or should be.

Sharing a Bed

Enticing one another into bed is the problem. The voluntary body values its independence of action and conscience; the public body wants guarantees that it will be neither swindled nor embarrassed. Both are aware that the public and sectional interests may only coincide for so long and on certain terms. What types of relationship exist then:

the local QUANGO - essentially, in many cases a creation of local government. It enables arms length sponsorship of controversial projects and attracts private and commercial sponsorship. Arts Trusts and many museums, some very large, are in this category. The 'Trust' can be a very effective focus for the sort of voluntary activity a local council would neither attract nor wish to handle;

The consultancy - where a public body buys the advice and time of a member of staff of the voluntary body;

the agency - where sites in public ownership are managed by a voluntary body, often on a cheap lease, sometimes for a fee. The BTCV has helped North West Water Authority restore Rivington Gardens on this basis;

direct sponsorship by grants - from say a county council to a conservation trust on the understanding that a member of staff will undertake educational, recreation or conser-

vation work of public benefit.

Adjusting Ones Posture

It is taking time for some local authorities to see the value of collaboration and for the suspicion of voluntary bodies to be overcome. The tendency of local politicians to see the voluntary sector as cheap labour, or as they might put it "multiplying the value of the council's investment", maybe a risky attitude. The extraordinary fact is that expert voluntary bodies are often led by public employees seeking a way round the obstructions of their official body. They clearly see different priorities from their authority and will only co-operate so far. Promoting public benefits such as environmental conservation and recreation opportunities may necessitate local authorities adopting a role as sponsor and enabler rather than prime mover. This comes hard to some members and officials.

One of the best examples of collaboration between public and voluntary sectors is the Derwent Valley Scheme centred on Matlock in Derbyshire, a joint effort by eleven voluntary and ten public bodies. The extraordinary achievement has been the way that they have welded a common purpose from often widely differing sectional aims - first in commissioning Dartington Amenity Research Trust to undertake an interpretive plan for the area and now by working towards the establishment of a Trust to help achieve, co-operation and collaboration. The outcome, with luck, will leave each partner free to innovate and manage individual projects but the benefits of working together will be manifest:

for the public sector:

a better conserved environment;
visitor services provided
economically;

a heritage able to attract tourism on a big scale;
Co-ordinated presentation of the area to tourists; and more jobs, rate income, local pride, immigration of industry.

the voluntary sector is:

able to attract more income from visitors;
enabled to attract grant aid and sponsorship; and yet free to determine its own priorities and projects.

The economic benefits are, of course, my presumption but anyone who has seen the success of Ironbridge Gorge Museum Trust and the public benefits it has generated cannot doubt the potential.

Local Government: Midwife or Mother

The conclusions I draw are that relationships between public and voluntary sectors have never been more varied nor more productive. In housing, social services, education and heritage conservation and interpretation new patterns of collaboration are being evolved; some of the biggest schemes in interpretation (such as the Broadland Conservation Centre in Norfolk some years ago or the still infant Arkwright Society's Masson Mill at Cromford, Derbyshire), have demonstrated that a good idea can attract huge sums in capital to the voluntary body. It looks more and more as though skilled midwifery is as important a job of local government in promoting new projects as that of provider of public goods and services from the womb to the tomb.

Reference

Dartington Amenity Research Trust, 1979 'Interpreting the Derwent Valley' available, price £3.75 from the County Planning Officer, Derbyshire County Council, Matlock.

Designers for Learning and Interpretation

Nigel Hall, Manchester Polytechnic

Almost all, if not all, interpretive centres use graphic presentation of information. This might be for displays or it might be in the form of publications: books, kits, guides, pamphlets etc. At the moment the design work for these materials has to be done either by conventionally trained graphic designers working with subject experts, or by people who are not trained designers. Sometimes this works well but too often the resulting material fails to support the original objectives. Displays may be attractive but actually increase understanding; often carefully thought out educational material just looks dull resulting in people ignoring it.

In the belief that design can aid understanding and that it is possible to produce designers with the necessary special skills, Manchester Polytechnic began, in 1979, a course called, 'Design for Learning'. It is a full time honours degree course. The principal aim is to help develop graphic designers who possess not only technical and creative competence in design skills but who also have an understanding of how people learn. The concern of the course is that these 'designers for learning' should be able to make a valuable contribution to any area where human learning/interpretation is involved. Thus, 'designers for learning', will be involved in activities relating to school based learning, higher education, industrial training, commerce, museums and interpretation centres, and many other less easily categorised situations where materials or displays are needed to increase awareness and understanding.

The 'eating' that is the 'proof

of the pudding' has yet to be done in any absolute sense. The course has not yet had any graduates; qualified students will appear in 1982. However the 'pudding' has been 'tasted' and there are already clear signs, both of the capabilities of the students and, of particular importance to the course, of the demand for these skills.

It has always been one of our major concerns that, whenever possible students would work on real projects. All students projects in 'Design for Learning' are rooted in reality; they are often set by outside specialists who also frequently contribute to the course. What has surprised us, and greatly pleased us, is the extent to which projects, which began by being 'rooted in reality', have become increasingly real. As the course has developed in the first two years the numbers of projects carried out for outside organisations, in particular museums, schools and industry, have grown enormously.

We are very concerned that our students operate in the 'real' world. Many people have told us about Art and Design students who have ignored the real world when on student projects. It has come as a relief and pleasure to these people when they found that our students did appreciate the factors of limited funding, awkward buildings, institutional disputes and many other difficulties of actual practice.

So far students have produced tape-slides for Pilkingtons and the Polytechnic careers service. A series of 14 booklets for children using the Manchester Museum will shortly be on sale at the Museum. These have been written, illustrated and designed by first year students. Several students have done work for educational publishers both at home and abroad. Materials have been produced for Southport Museum and '42nd Street' a Manchester Welfare Organisation.

Materials are currently in preparation for the Harris Museum, Preston, the Pennine Heritage Trust, Sudbury Hall, Manchester Museum, William and Glynn Banks, the Manchester Foot Hospital Education Service and

several others. All are situations where materials or displays are needed to help people understand and learn.

We believe, very passionately, that skilled 'Designers for Learning' with an understanding and appreciation of those factors which influence human comprehension can only be of benefit to society. So much work is being undertaken in these areas, both in this country and abroad, that we feel the course is meeting a

real need.

The 'Design for Learning' course team is very keen both to hear from individuals and groups about work they are undertaking, and to welcome enquiries about the work of the course. We can be contacted by phone (061) 228 6171 ext 2267, or in writing to: 'Design for Learning', Faculty of Art and Design, Manchester Polytechnic, Manchester M15 6BR.

Letters

Tristram Besterman, Museum Professionals Group

Museum Collections and Interpretation

The Society has recently received a *cri de coeur* from a group representing all areas of museum activity, asking Interpretive Centres to think twice before acquiring major collections.

Museums readily recognise the role which centres very successfully play in interpreting the environment and realise their need to use artefacts and natural objects in display work to that end. What museums are alarmed about is the recent acquisition of collections by an interpretive centre far beyond the needs of display and education.

Museums feel that the care of collections is their area of special responsibility - which includes not just the physical preservation of material in perpetuity, but also the security of associated documentation, its publication and availability to researchers (and, even to interpretive centres!). And they rightly point out that these are not functions that interpretive centres are geared to fulfilling.

So if you are offered a collection, please try diplomatically to deflect the well-intentioned benefactor towards the appropriate local museum (if you're not sure which this might be, you can always seek the advice of the Museums Association at 34 Bloomsbury Way, London WC1A 2SF). Make sure you

let the local curator know what you have put his way - the good relationship that this will establish should enable you to benefit from his unstinting co-operation in future projects!

COMMENT BY G. STANSFIELD, DEPARTMENT OF MUSEUM STUDIES, LEICESTER UNIVERSITY

Tristram Besterman's note raises a problem which has been with us for some time and which is not as simple as first appears. In the first place private individuals have the right to deposit their collections with Interpretive Centres if they so wish and there is nothing to prevent centres from possessing and using such collections. Also the housing and care of collections in some museums leaves a lot to be desired and curators have not always been as helpful as they might have been in encouraging the setting up of centres.

The ideal situation would be for local museums to offer their expertise in documenting and curating collections in Interpretive Centres. Where collections are important scientifically it is to be hoped that these will be housed in the local museum. In return the local museum would assist in making suitable display and teaching material available.

The Society will do its best to put Interpretive Centres in touch with local museums.

Interpretation leads you astray?

A prominent member of SIBH suggested we include the following - a recent editorial from the journal of the Association of Countryside Rangers, who kindly gave their permission for its reproduction here.

Mr. Hew Watt, an Essex Farmer, writing in the Autumn number of "The Countryman", makes the point that those who abuse the countryside will be the cause of many not being permitted to enjoy it, for they are hardening the attitude of farmers who suffer from motor-cycles being ridden across crops, dogs chasing livestock and pony riders in the corn. People responsible for this kind of behaviour are turning Mr. Watt's farm into "a public recreation ground." One offender claimed that the fields of rye grass in which he was training a dog were "God's fields, not yours." "His views," says Mr. Watt, "are a shattering indictment of our educational system."

There is a tendency to lay the blame of most modern problems and evils at the feet of the educational system. Perhaps there is some justification for doing so, but most of us will know that children in the countryside in school parties are made far more aware of how to behave there by their teachers than they are by their parents. There are bad examples of course, but the majority of school teachers are an influence for good in this respect and if we think that they do not always succeed we have only got to experience a visit from a school party of French children to realise what they do achieve.

When Country Parks were first started the understanding was that their primary objective was to protect the more sensitive areas of countryside, and farmland in particular. The policy was, therefore, to manage them on the basic principle of retaining the spontaneity essential to the proper enjoyment of natural countryside. If

a Country Park could be presented to the public as a piece of natural countryside in which people could roam at will at any time and in which conflicts of interests had been reconciled by careful, unobtrusive management, people would have neither the need, nor the desire to trespass onto farm land. This process of sucking a nuisance from farm land to a place where it could be managed worked so well in the early days with the earliest of the Country Parks that even farmers and the N.F.U. recognised the value and benefits of having them near farms close to large conurbations. Why then, are Country and Urban fringe parks not now achieving this everywhere? Could it be their fault and the fault of the Rangers, or their employing authorities that farmers like Mr Watt are troubled with the nuisances he describes? There may be no facilities near his farm, but there are other farmers with similar problems in areas where there are Countryside recreational facilities.

The Countryside Commission pamphlet No. 9 in the 'Advisory Series' - Self Guided Trails, says:- "Research has shown that trails have failed to distinguish themselves as popular sources of enjoyment or interest for most visitors to the countryside." Perhaps Ranger Services should frequently assess the effectiveness of what they are doing in the form of well established practices and beliefs. Are we quite sure that interpretation, for example, is not leading us astray in respect of our main aim? Is it really effective? Is the best answer to encourage visitors to the countryside into what modern jargon calls "an education situation", where they are captives for a conducted walk, a self guided trail, a talk, a film show, an exhibition and all that? Some Ranger Services now spend most of their effort and resources on this kind of thing. Others still maintain that they are easily recognisable, helpful informants to those who seek help and unobtrusive guardians, managing and maintaining their Country Park as an attractively natural place to come to. A pony rider neither wishes nor needs to ride through standing crops if Country

Parks provide country riding and incorporate responsibility for maintaining local bridleways to a standard that makes them useable in all seasons of the year. These two different approaches cannot both be right, though a compromise may be provided that Rangers are responsible for every aspect on a Country Park and that duties are not split between Rangers, Interpreters, Information Officers and estate maintenance staff.

The principle of the retention of spontaneity presupposes that there cannot be any commercialism such as book-stalls, gift shops, charges for car parks and other facilities. Tax payers and rate payers indirectly subscribe to the cost of Country Park and money for them must come from somewhere, but a direct charge for anything or the enticement into spending money in order to fill the coffers

WYE VALLEY WALK

A waymarked walk - the Wye Valley Walk - has recently been established between Chepstow and Ross-on-Wye and leads you through some of the loveliest parts of the Wye Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The walk passes through fields and woods, down country lanes, past farms, villages and towns and along the banks of the world famous river Wye. The 34 mile trail is waymarked by yellow arrows and yellow dots - so there should be no worry about getting hopelessly lost.

You can follow the walk for as far as you like in either direction; it can also be used as a link with the many other waymarked walks in the area - most notable being the Offa's Dyke Path which extends the length of Wales, from Chepstow to Prestatyn.

To accompany walkers on the Wye Valley Walk an attractive "all weather" map - pack has been produced by Gwent County Council on behalf of the Wye Valley AONB Joint Advisory Committee. Comprising full colour extracts from the Ordnance Survey 1:50,000 scale maps, protected against the elements by a laminated covering and including a great deal of information about places of interest en route - the map pack is the perfect companion for the

is in direct opposition to the retention of spontaneity. When the American Government made an offer, in 1854, to buy a large tract of Indian Land, Chief Seattle replied "How can you buy or sell the sky, the warmth of the land. The idea is strange to us. If we do not own the freshness of the air and the sparkle of the water how can you buy them?..."

Should not Country Parks and even Urban Fringe Parks be aiming to create conditions where the birds can be heard singing and the frogs arguing round the pond because conditions are kept right for them to do so and for people to be encouraged to come to hear them, absolutely gratis, because conditions are made natural enough for them to do so in their own way and without fear of being herded into "an education situation" - ugh!, or becoming the victims of hard salesmanship.

walker. It can be obtained (price 50p + postage) from PRO, Gwent County Council. You will also find it on sale in tourist information centres and in local shops. 33% discount on bulk (more than 15 copies) orders. Two hundred years ago during the period which we now know as the age of Romantic Tourism it became fashionable to 'do' the Wye Tour - the highlight of which was a journey by boat down river from Ross to Chepstow. Unfortunately it is no longer possible to do the whole journey by boat but at least one can still discover the hidden delights of the Wye Valley countryside away from the busy roads, by going on the Wye Valley Walk.

The Walk has been developed through the joint efforts of Gwent, Gloucestershire and Hereford and Worcester County Councils and the District Councils, with the co-operation of the Forestry Commission and other local landowners.

Clearing and waymarking the path, and repairing and constructing new stiles has been carried out by the Wye Valley AONB Warden Service, the Wye Valley AONB Project Officer, and by teams sponsored by the Manpower Services Commission.

Carnegie Trust

The latest annual report from the Carnegie Trust outlines the Quinquennial Policy for 1981-85. Three themes are identified: Arts, Community Services and Heritage. Under Heritage, readers will be interested to note the following extract:

"The present Heritage policy evolved from progress in the Trustees' museums policies and later in countryside policies. Trustees do not assist now with the general developments in museums and information centres, or with the conservation and restoration of buildings.

In the next quinquennium 1981-85 the Trustees will assist developments in Interpretation which aim at modest and cost-effective schemes, sponsored by voluntary societies in town or country. The Trustees are prepared to consider for grant-aid the earlier stages in the preparation of schemes - for example, drawing up an inventory or carrying out a survey to help in the preparation of the story to be told. Experience has shown that the completion of these stages is essential for future success. Schemes involving a new building or conversion of an old one will only qualify for aid if the sponsors have followed the necessary preliminary stages.

Guidelines for Interpretation

In assessing a scheme, the Trustees will use these standards:

(a) the presentation should be concerned with several different aspects within the natural, social and cultural history of the area;

(b) in bringing alive the local story from the past the scheme should show the relationships between aspects of the heritage, for example, how man's influence has affected wild-life and the crafts of the area, or geology the buildings. A synoptic view of the heritage will be important;

(c) the appeal should be widely based; the story simple, easy and a pleasure to absorb especially to encourage further learning. The interpretation should evoke a feeling for the place

and provide an inspiring experience;

(d) the approach should be 'professional' and with good standards of presentation, design and finish;

(e) it should be devised and developed by local people, probably members of a voluntary body, primarily for the enjoyment and benefit of those who live in the area. Co-operation between societies and with statutory authorities will be encouraged;

(f) in the whole process the sponsors should have followed the stages advocated by the Trustees - particularly with regard to composition of an inventory, a survey to prepare information about the story to be told and the careful preparation of material;

(g) sponsors should have thought carefully and sought advice about the media to be used. In many cases a permanent building or centre is not needed and a leaflet or booklet, signed trail or portable display, or 'on-site' display might be appropriate;

(h) sponsors should have regard to the resource-management aspects of their project which should aim to make visitors aware of site significance and be concerned with the appreciation and conservation of a resource or site."

Dunfermline

As well as endowing a United Kingdom Trust, presently closely involved with developments in interpretation, Andrew Carnegie also founded a Carnegie Dunfermline Trust. The Trust invited David Hayes (of Landmark) to report on interpretation in Dunfermline. Here is Trust Secretary FRED MANN's summary of the study from this year's CDT report:

Last year's Report quoted Mr Carnegie himself as writing in his Autobiography: '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 mediaeval Abbey, the

ruined Monastery and Palace, Queen Margaret's Shrine and the ruins of King Malcolm's Tower, the tombs of The Bruce and the other 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.'

It has often been suggested that, apart from a few enthusiasts, Dunfermline people tend to be unaware of the town's historic tradition and of the people, places and events which have made the town, both physically and socially, what it is to-day. In order to find out whether this was really the case and if so what might be done about it, the Trustees in 1979 invited Mr David Hayes, Director of the Landmark Centres at Carrbridge and Stirling, to produce a Report: this was received in 1980, and is reproduced in the Appendix.

In his Report - written with a knowledge of Dunfermline gained from a brief period of personal residence here, with a wide experience of what is offered on other towns throughout the country and in America, and with the authority of one who has himself successfully pioneered new methods of interpretation as a commercial business - Mr Hayes comes to the conclusion that Dunfermline does not make enough of itself either for the benefit of the residents or for its visitors. He points out that most of the existing museums and historic sites need to improve the ways in which they attract and interest those who visit them. Describing Dunfermline Abbey, the Monastery and Palace Ruins as the greatest attraction for most visitors, he draws attention to the poverty of information about the significance of a most historic site, contrasting the Department of the Environment's reticence with the work of the Society of Friends of Dunfermline Abbey who have provided informative panels about the adjoining Parish Church.

The Dunfermline Museum, originally established by the Trustees themselves, he describes as labouring under many disadvantages - sited in an out-of-the-way location, severely restricted as to space, and

with old-fashioned and inflexible display units. Turning to Pittencrieff Park, Mr Hayes suggests that the costume collection in Pittencrieff House is of no great relevance to the town and of little real interest to tourists, and he describes the layout of conservatories and the rabbit pavilion as somewhat unimaginative.

Mr Hayes is equally critical of the Carnegie Birthplace Memorial, although he acknowledges recent attempts to bring more atmosphere into the Cottage. The few wall plaques put up at various historic sites some years ago are dismissed as disappointingly uninformative and often too technical, while he points out also that there is at present no satisfactory brief visitor's guide to Dunfermline.

Mr Hayes goes on to suggest a policy for the future. The keystone would be a new Dunfermline Centre - a lively and attractive multi-purpose space which could house a permanent collection, temporary displays, and facilities for visitors (particularly school-children) to take part in various activities reconstructing past events. An ideal location for this would be the present Sheriff Court Buildings in the High Street, soon to be vacated. Complementary to the Centre might be a smaller building near the Abbey which could tell the history of royal and religious Dunfermline. The Dunfermline Museum collection could be transferred to the new Centre, while Pittencrieff House might be used for natural history themes, particularly focusing attention on the Park itself and its wildlife. Mr Hayes suggests that new displays at the Carnegie Birthplace could tell more vividly the engrossing story of Mr. Carnegie's life and his benefactions, and he would engage the casual visitor's attention by a more imaginative use of wall plaques, the production of a well-designed leaflet and guidebook, and the general promotion of Dunfermline as a tourist resort. During the summer, an invited audience consisting of Trustees, representatives of the Local Authorities, and other individuals and organisations interested in interpretation, heard

Mr Hayes himself present his Report, illustrating it with slides and commentary. Later in the year, the Trustees, in accepting the Report, agreed to transmit it to Dunfermline

SIBH matters

NEW DIRECTIONS FOR THE SOCIETY

Graham Taylor, Chairman

There was a time during Autumn 1980 when things looked black for the Society. Our liabilities appeared to exceed our assets, we had cancelled one meeting and another had failed to materialise and our newsletter had missed an issue. Things look very different now: we have a healthy bank balance, the newsletter is safe and well, the Carnegie UK Trust has offered us a substantial grant for the coming years and we have had an outstanding successful AGM and conference in Manchester.

The Committee hope and believe that we are tackling the issues of running the Society's affairs effectively, but the long term good of the Society now lies in the hands of the membership. That was one of the conclusions of the review we undertook before preparing the paper "New Directions for the Society", which was approved at the AGM. The first fruit of that review is the programme of regional events.

Money Matters

Members will be receiving regular reminders soon about the state of their subs from the Treasurer. Circulars sent out last autumn showed a fine response of hurried subscribing and even payment of overdue and forgotten contributions.

The records are being overhauled, and thanks to an offer from a committee member, computerised: (well, it's only a little one, and it's a nice one, and it doesn't get tipped over by the cat). Apologies to anyone who has received late replies to queries: the correspondence will be kept down if people remember to change banker's orders to the new £5 dues: that Corporate members need to nominate

District Council and Fife Regional Council with a view to the establishment of a Joint Committee which with other organisations might concert action for its implementation.

The programme is bigger than we could have hoped for. Please do whatever you can to see that they are well attended, especially by non-members. Our thanks must go to the local organisers for their ready offers of help.

The longer term is equally bright, especially if we can increase our membership as we hope. The issue of widening our contacts and influence among members of the many associated professional groups was a second fundamental point in the review. We plan to hold meetings with the Tourism Society and to create links with the Association of Independent Museums. The next national meeting in London in December will tackle issues in the evaluation of interpretation which ought to create a very wide appeal to exhibition designers and museum curatorial staff. We intend to publish the proceedings with the aid of the Carnegie Trust grant.

It is a great relief to be able to write in these terms. The rest is now, very largely, dependent on the response the Society can generate and the contribution individual members make.

three names to receive newsletters, etc - important because some individual members have subs paid by official bodies, but if the sub is in the name of the body it is a corporate one at £15 which should be paid.

As reported to the AGM, the funds have recovered well, and have been boosted by a further grant from the Carnegie United Kingdom Trust. At the date of the April Conference the balance stood at around £1,000, and over 200 members, a number which is growing. However, if you don't want to be cast into the wilderness, and have not got an up-to-date Banker's Order, you need to have paid £5 this last April for the next year.

Alan Machin, Treasurer

Reviews

The Which Heritage Guide

Authors: Clive Johnstone and Winifred Weston
Published by the Consumers' Association and Hodder and Stoughton
Paperback: 458 pp. £4.95p

Society members have more than one reason to welcome this book. First of all, because the authors are members, which brought SIBH mention in some of the launch publicity. Second, a critical look at visitor attractions is long overdue. Kenneth Hudson's "Good Museum Guide" goes soft on what should be prime targets for a book cast in the mould of the well-known "Good Food Guide": that mould produced only jelly.

In many ways this is meatier stuff. The authors selected 550 places for their comments. Phrases like "the strong air of a museum" appear as criticisms: "crisp standards" as praise. One folk museum is criticised for a nasty-looking car park. An historic house had weaknesses where "some of the arrangements for visitors - or was it the visitors - did not match the sophistication of the house's interior". On the whole there is evaluation by praising the good points of attractions rather than the making of sweeping criticisms.

Each place gets a couple of hundred words or so of description or comment, and in a wide margin details of location, telephone, access for the disabled, refreshment facilities, etc. Opening times are listed and so are admission prices, which will obviously date quickly, but will still form their comparisons with other places. Details of interpretation are not particularly drawn out, except in a general way which would be sufficient for most visitors. The concentration is on appearances and facilities, though many Society members might think that more comment on the type of interpretation, and its quality, would open more eyes to its importance.

To me the major failing is in the choice of "heritage", which is very much related to architecture, museums

and gardens, an old-fashioned selection. Why miss out the Rare Breeds survival centres like Ribber, Guiting Power and Easton? Industrial archaeology is thinly represented - no sign of Wheal Martyn, Kew Pumping Station or Ellesmere Port Boat Museum. In order to give space to those that do get in - say one in ten or fewer of the attractions which are provided with visitor facilities - much weeding has been done. In their introduction there seems to be a suggestion that only the "places whose heritage has been ... conserved and displayed sympathetically, professionally ... and with style" have gone in, or, in other words, all others failed.

To include a lot more places would probably require regional editions. That seems to be a sensible direction so that we could hear the Consumers' Association-type comments on many more places. Another category omitted is Zoos - there are some Wildfowl Trust centres, but no Chester, Bristol or London Zoos: as zoos tend to be interpretive disaster areas that's also a pity.

Alan Machin

RICHARD MABEY THE COMMON GROUND
Hutchinson £8.95 1980

Subtitled 'A Place for Nature in Britain's Future' this book, produced in conjunction with the Nature Conservancy Council, is both informative and elegant in the ways it invites reassessment of some of our precepts about nature conservation. It opens up many important avenues of thought that will need to be explored if we are to reach a fair and enduring balance in the decades ahead.

One of its main theses will be of special interest to members. Mr Mabey goes to lengths to underline how people have tended to move in protection of the things they hold dear by personal adoption or special significance. He sees little future for spreading conservation ideas through clinical arguments. Any form of nurturing of the relationship between people and place is therefore important.

It is an extremely important book that

marks a point of maturity in our understanding of the environment as did 'Silent Spring' and Fraser-Darling's 'Wilderness and Plenty'. Like those books, it is one that many people involved in conservation will not want to be without. Together with Howard Newby's 'Green and Pleasant Land?' on social change in rural England it provides a potent array of ideas and arguments that show that humans need to relate to each other before they can achieve a successful relationship with the environment.

Terry Robinson

Interpreting for Park Visitors

William J. Lewis
Eastern Acorn Press
(Eastern National Park and Management Association)

Bill Lewis, a career-seasoned employee of the United States National Park Service since 1949 has written this handbook for active interpreters and its main audience is the seasonal interpreters employed by Park Service. It covers the basic principles of interpretation before giving guidance on the most popular activities the interpreter is likely to be engaged in, giving directions and advice, formal talks and guided walks.

It includes a detailed section on self evaluation which in effect reviews and summarises the points made.

The book forms a useful aide-memoir to the approaches and techniques required for successful, engaging interpretation. It is designed and illustrated by Keith Hoofnagle.

Interaction Imprint

Interaction have recently published a

leaflet describing their publications on community arts, community communications, social action, theatre arts etc and many of the titles will be of interest to people working in interpretation. It can be obtained from Inter-Action Trust Ltd., 15, Wilkin Street, London, NW5 3NX. Some of the titles of special interest to members are described below.

Print - How You Can Do It Yourself

Jonathan Zeitlyn

A guide to basic print and artwork techniques packed with practical information on how to get your message across. Revised and heavily illustrated third edition.

Cased 0 904571 23 8 £5.90
Paperback 0 904571 24 6 £1.90

Marketing for Small Publishers

Keith Smith

Written in a concise step-by-step form, this guide takes publishers through the various stages from planning a promotion to selling to bookshops and libraries. "Applies to publishers both large and small and provides an extraordinarily good basis for the subject" (The Bookseller)
Paperback 0 904571 34 3 £3.50

Basic Video in Community Work

Andi Biren
and Inter-Action's Media Division

'A constant concern of these handbooks is to demystify the techniques involved ...' (Times Educational Supplement) Describes successful applications of video in community development and points out the pitfalls. A user's manual is included with a guide to obtaining equipment.

Illustrated pamphlet 0 904571 05 X 75p

News and Notes

UPPER DERWENT VALLEY

Ken Jackson of the Severn Trust Water Authority has sent us a copy of the new brochure on the Upper Derwent Valley produced in collaboration with the Peak Park Joint Planning Board. A rather dense, but informative, text, and a rather blank map. Is this, we wonder, the sort of cartography necessary to avoid paying those scandalous copyright fees to the Ordnance Survey? An accompanying little leaflet from PPJPB explains the Traffic Management scheme, and describes visitor opportunities.

STOP CAMPAIGN

Interpreters may wish to join others particularly in the worlds of museums and archaeology in supporting the Stop campaign aimed at discouraging 'treasure hunting' and in particular the indiscriminate use of metal detectors. Details from Council for British Archaeology, 112 Kennington Road, London, SE11 6RE.

ROBIN WADE AT WORK

The new Mountbatten exhibition has just opened at Broadlands, where its presentation of the life and times of Lord Mountbatten is part of the tour of the house.

A new project is a museum of farming at Murtonpark Livestock Centre in Yorkshire. R W Design Associates are presently planning, writing editing and researching and the first stage is due to be opened in April 1981.

NORTH OF THE BORDER

A couple of interesting awards by the council for Museums and Galleries in Scotland: in Dundee for a new local history gallery at Broughty Castle Museum, and for Gairloch Heritage Museum's new display pit outside the museum to house a unique "Zulu" fishing boat.

LEICESTER TRAIL

Keith Wheeler's fourth Town Trail in Leicester, prepared in collaboration with Keith Horton, interprets interwar local authority housing in Braunstone.

The approach is didactic rather than evocative, but clearly demonstrates the fascinating potential of everyday suburban environments we scarcely glance at from the car. Details from Keith at Leicester Urban Studies Centre, Leicester Polytechnic.

PORTHMADOG POTTERY

The Craftcentre Cymru tells us that the Porthmadog Pottery is having a 132 square metre mural painted on its main entrance wall. The artist is Ed Pavey, who plans to depict the town's history on representations of pots. The job will take about three months. Further information from H.W. Swann at Melin yr Wyddfa, Porthmadog, Gwynedd LL49 9DH.

INSTITUTE OF INDUSTRIAL ARCHAEOLOGY

Forthcoming events of the I.I.A. include a summer school (22-29 July) centred on Ironbridge on Industrial Archaeology in Britain; a weekend on the Country House of the Victorian Industrialist (26-27 September) at Attingham Park, and short courses on The History of the Coalport Company (3-4 October), The Market Town Foundry (10-11 October), Victorian Ceramics (24-25 October) and The English Household before the Industrial Revolution (7-8 November). Details and brochures from 11A, Ironbridge Gorge Museum, Ironbridge, Telford, Shropshire, TF8 7AW.

ACCLIMATISATION

Following the successful weekend workshop on Environmental Awareness at Losehill Hall early this year, Stewart Anthony has produced a short report 'Acclimatisation, a sensory and conceptual approach to environmental awareness'. This briefly outlines the history and philosophy of 'Acclimatisation', describes the events of the workshop and appraises the usefulness of an environmental awareness programme in environmental education in schools and for adults in Britain.

For a copy of the report, more information on techniques, relevant publications and the next workshop planned for 1982, contact:

Stewart Anthony, Senior Lecturer
Peak National Park Study Centre
Losehill Hall, Castleford,
Derbyshire 0433 20373

QUEEN ELIZABETH COUNTRY PARK

Mike Wearing, Senior Countryside Interpreter at QECP in Hampshire, runs a model information service. Cheap, cheerful and frequent Press Releases keep the public informed of what's going on, and far enough in advance for everyone to plan their own participation in a marvellously varied programme - from family walks to craft demonstrations.

GLODDFA GANOL

The Ffestiniog Mountain Tourist Centre gives access to the largest slate mine in the world. Among a number of attractions for the holiday - making family, the slate industry and the story of the mine are interpreted at the site.

DES SHORT COURSE

Environmental Education for the Vocational Student 14-17 December 1981 at Wolverhampton Polytechnic.

This course (DES number N840) is aimed at teachers in institutions of further and higher education, concerned with courses designed for students involved in a range of environmentally related industries, including agriculture, construction, engineering, industrial sciences and extraction. Further details and forms (form TT15) from DES and LEA's.

TWICE AS MANY GUIDED WALKS IN NEW BOOKLET

Starting on Easter Sunday, April 19, and ending in October, this year's programme of walks promoted by the Countryside Commission in the West Midlands is almost twice the size of last year's. All the walks are listed in the 1981 Explore Your Local Countryside, local libraries and information centres. The walks are organised by local societies, local authorities and clubs with an interest in the countryside. They take place at local beauty spots and other interesting countryside areas. They are arranged and led by men and women who know these areas well and who can talk about local history, geology, wildlife and so on. Some of the themes of this year's walks are: Natural history in an industrial area; Birmingham's canals; wildlife and landscape history; the history

of a country estate and the countryside in Spring.

This is the second year of the Explore Your Local Countryside programme of guided walks. It has grown out of a two-year experiment, sponsored by the Commission, which aimed to find out if guided walks would be popular in the West Midlands and other mainly urban areas. When the Commission asked for information on local guided walks last year they were able to list over 100 walks at 20 locations. This year's booklet has nearer 200 walks at 40 locations. Copies can be obtained by writing to or telephoning the Countryside Commission, Cumberland House, Broad Street, Birmingham B15 1TD (021 632 6503) or by calling into libraries and information centres. The full report of the original Commission-sponsored "Explore Your Local Countryside" experiment in the West Midlands (CCP 135) is available from the Countryside Commission, Crescent Place, Cheltenham, Gloucestershire GL50 3RA, price £3.40.

FARM OPEN DAYS WORKSHOP 1980

The Farm Open Days workshop 1980 project aimed to run eleven demonstration farm open days arranged around the regions of England and Wales to stimulate high standards of management and interpretation among new and existing organisers. The project officer's report reveals some useful findings. In fact, those attending the workshops attached to normal farm open days tended to be potential organisers rather than existing ones. The project officer concluded that existing organisers tend to improve their standards of management and interpretation through their own experience and are not eager to draw on that of others.

The workshops were however good at putting over the concept of open days and of stimulating discussion and questions.

The approach involved several risks, all of which were realised at some point during the season. The project's objectives of demonstrating broad principles had to be reconciled with the more circumscribed objectives of each individual event.

There was also the need to rely on some organisers of only limited experience. In some cases, the projection of the open day into the 'professional' public eye led to some organisers and sponsors becoming stage struck.

The bad weather of the 1980 summer highlighted the vulnerability of interpretive events to the climate and revealed the need for contingency plans or pluvius insurance policies for bad weather.

The project was generally successful in organising the demonstrations and stimulating cooperative activity and goodwill. Meanwhile the project officer was able to provide assistance to the national programme of open days (some 90 in all) in the form of a "Leaflet About Leaflets", a set of posters interpreting common features on the farm and directional arrows with space for individual captions. This material has been put into production to maintain supplies for future years.

The main problem still remains however of how to sustain organisers of farm open days without employing an agency to continually chivvy organisers, especially farmers, the majority of whom seem to lack the confidence to open their farms to the public of their own accord. Countryside Commission regional offices are able to assist those who approach them with plans for an open day and some local authorities are attempting to maintain the interest of farmers and coordinate individual open days within a programme of events for the region.

INTERPRETATION OF REGIONS

The Hadrian's Wall Consultative Committee 18 months ago asked its officers' Working Party to form a small group and prepare a strategy for information, interpretation and publicity of the Wall. A year later a broad framework had been prepared but it is a sign of the times that the consultative committee has not yet had a chance to meet and discuss it. While the desirability of cooperation was seen as high, hopes of achieving

it in practice have not risen appreciably as a result of the exercise.

It has, however, achieved the positive step of producing a free leaflet giving information on the whole Wall and this is now available. Copies can be obtained from the Northumberland National Park Authority.

Meanwhile the recently established Broads Authority is approaching its role in information and interpretation by seeing how it can foster and coordinate the efforts of others and, if necessary, where it may need to fill any gaps by direct provision. The framework is in the early stages of preparation and will be incorporated in the management plan for the Broads. News of progress will follow.

This Newsletter has been sent out using a mailing list prepared on the micro-computer system belonging to the Hereford Cider Museum Trust.

Computerising our membership list will give us great benefits in flexibility, but we have heard too many horror stories about the results of computerisation to be confident that we have not introduced errors during the encoding.

So would you check the address label and return it to Michael Quinion (12 Bakers Furlong, Burghill, Hereford HR4 7SB) if it is incorrect or incomplete.

Clearly, the biggest problem comes with members we have missed altogether: it would help a great deal if you could canvass colleagues who are members and let us know of anyone deprived of a copy.

interpretation newsletter

Regional Events

Meetings of the Society will be taking place on a regional basis during the summer and autumn as announced in the attached paper. We have a full programme for 1981 but, as we are not going to have permanent regional representatives of the Society, would members please consider possible regional events for 1981 and let the Events Secretary know of any proposals they may have or ideas they may like to discuss. People offering to run events without having to be chased will be most welcome.

Regional Meeting for Yorkshire?

Cathy Macfie, living in Wetherby, is hoping to set up a meeting for members wishing to travel into the Leeds area. It will be held next autumn, last a full day, and be at least part-linked to the theme of "Effectiveness of Exhibitions."

Other regional meetings may benefit soon from a map produced by the Treasurer showing where members live. Among other things it shows the potential failure of local branches being set up in the Orkneys, and the clustering effect of our members. First conclusions on the latter suggest

that personal contact is important in bringing in members - so keep up the good work.

PEAK PARK STUDY CENTRE

Education in the Countryside:
2nd-6th November, 1981

A Countryside Commission sponsored training course to give practical advice to Countryside staff wishing to make closer contact with school groups.

Design and Graphics in Interpretation:
7th-9th December, 1981

A workshop to demonstrate the design and graphics techniques needed to produce good quality interpretive material (e.g. leaflets, signs, exhibitions, posters) on a limited budget.

Further details available from:
Peter Townsend, Principal, Peak National Park Study Centre, Losehill Hall, Castleton, Derbyshire, S30 2WB (Telephone: Hope Valley (0433)20373).

Society for the Interpretation of Britain's Heritage

LONDON MEETING

to be held on December 12th 1981

11.00 till 17.00 at the British Museum(Natural History)

EVALUATION OF INTERPRETATION

Speakers: Geoff Stansfield (A review of past work and findings) David Uzzell and Ian Parkin (Forestry Commission evaluation package applied at Risley Moss) Terry Stevens (surprise results of evaluation of guided walks in Pembrokeshire) Andrew Pierssene (site interpretation boards in Norfolk). A member of the museum staff(Policy and Practice on Monitoring and Evaluation at the Museum) Discussion (Future of SIBH and CEI)
