

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

The subscription for membership is £5 per annum for individuals and £15 for corporate bodies.

The Newsletter

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Readers please note:-

The copy date for the next issue of
Interpretation is February 12th 1982.

Viewpoint One: Interpretation Awards

If SIBH is the expert body in interpretation, and aims to be noticed, why doesn't it organise awards for interpretive schemes?

There are lots of schemes around for rewarding effort in various worthy causes: the Civic Trust recognises meritorious work in architecture, and the Guild of Travel Writers eulogises over tourist attractions. In fact the BTA "Come to Britain" awards are given in the same area, and so are the ETB "Sir Mark Henig" awards. But these are essentially for schemes which sell themselves well to visitors, and what interpreters are interested in is not quite the same.

We are occupied with the communication process between the attraction and the visitor. While Britain is rapidly turning into one giant theme park there are an awful lot of attractions appearing. Their message-bearing media range from publications, exhibitions, slide shows and information panels through to guide-rangers, message repeaters, and demonstrators. Our hope is to see a high standard of technique and inspiration employed to catch the visitors' interest and hold his attention. Just as the Civic Trust shows its praise for building schemes which carry the mark of quality right through the process, it would be good to see awards given for interpretive excellence also carried through the whole execution of a scheme.

The aim might be to offer a flexible number of awards each year. They could

be graded gold, silver and bronze, or else left as one-class "awards". As in certain other competitions, a different area might be judged each year - chosen either according to the media used or to the type of facility involved. There is the variation used in one place of giving each year orchids and onions to environmental successes and disasters. Who would get your vote for an onion, then?

The tricky part of running this kind of Interpretive It's A Knockout is the amount of organisation needed - people, money and time, to judge, to publicise and to reward. Even though our membership is increasing and our activities have blossomed again, it would be a strain to support an annual competition without outside help. Perhaps there could be a method of nomination and voting by the membership to find suitable winners? The key reason for doing something like this is that, if SIBH wishes to see high standards of interpretation, it has got to mark out the people or places it thinks achieve those standards, in a way that other people notice and try to emulate.

Alan Machin

Viewpoint Two: Hello, Good Buddies

As you drive into the Great Smokey Mountains National Park in the eastern United States, roadside signs invite you to retune your car radio to a specified wavelength. The Visitor Centre up ahead has a message for you. No matter that on the day I was there the tape recorded voice was repeating rather banal instructions of the don't-feed-the-bears variety - or that reception was only tip-top in the Visitor Centre car park. The potential of this form of communication was easy to imagine. As a management tool it could guide people to, or away from, any spot as desired. It could report on weather and traffic conditions, on what centres or other facilities were open, and on special events and exhibitions. At another level it could comment on the changing natural scene, picking themes of which evidence was visible from the road and enticing the car rider out of his mobile cocoon at specific spots in search of more immediate experience. Apart from long distance hikers on the Appalachian Trail, virtually all the visitors come by car or coach, and all were accessible to a radio interpreter.

Some years earlier I had spent a weekend at Losehill Hall, during which I had taken a motor trail by booking a cassette and tape recorder out of the Castleton Information Centre and had passed a marvellously evocative afternoon showing a Canadian round the village of Eyam and its district. One could switch off or replay the tape message at will, stand at the very spot where a part of the recording had been made, and use the clearly presented linking trail to guide ones journey. The following year the service ended - I believe for financial reasons.

I have wondered off and on since whether there would ever come a time in Britain when the full potential of these two ways for the interpreter to reach through the insulation of the motor car would be realised. There seemed to be considerable obstacles: UK broadcasting laws don't encourage private radio stations; loaned equipment is vulnerable and 'realistic' monetary deposits discourage the borrower. And you can't talk back to a broadcast.

Now, however, you can: since Citizens Band broadcasting became legal in October. Here I suggest is a marvellous new tool for interpretation - if it is used properly. Who will be first to set up an experimental service? Guided car trails in a National Park, question and answer sessions 'on air' from the Visitor Centre? Only a matter of time before there are enough CB sets around to make it worthwhile. Let's start planning now.

Anthony Fyson

READERS ARE INVITED TO CONTRIBUTE VIEWPOINTS OF 400 TO 500 WORDS ON ANY SUBJECT, IDEA OR ARGUMENT.

Flee to the Forest

Margaret Mitchell, Notts County Council, Leisure Services Dept.

On a warm, sunny day in the urban sprawl of the North Midlands, the chief objective for the average family might well be escape. Escape to the countryside and the broad oak woodlands of Sherwood Forest, where the kids can pretend to be outlaws while mum and dad pretend for half an hour that they haven't any kids.

What better form of escapism than a step back in time to the apparently carefree days of the medieval outlaw and his merry band when life was spent strolling through the greenwood, feasting on poached venison and effortlessly righting wrongs? So there may have been the odd attack of Black Death, or starvation, and the lower social orders may have suffered virtual slavery under the feudal system, but these depressing facts are not uppermost in the thoughts of the average family as they speed up the M1 in search of the idyllic haunts of Robin Hood. Why should they be? On a day out, people want to enjoy themselves!

With this in mind, Nottinghamshire County Council planned its new exhibition 'Robin Hode and Mery Scherewode' in the Sherwood Forest Visitor Centre, Edwinstowe. An attempt has been made to illustrate the popular concept of Robin Hood that has kept its appeal for centuries, and to present it in a visually stimulating way. On entering the exhibition, the eye is first assailed by subtle colours and textures and by weird medieval perspectives, and it is then deceived by robbers and wild animals lurking in the green gloom. There is no story-line or developmental theme in any strict sense. The visitor takes a trip through time, chancing upon Alan-a-Dale singing to the forest creatures; Maid Marian, in plumed hat and tights watching the outlaw band around the camp fire; Much the Miller's son at work in his father's mill, and Robin himself receiving pardon from the king in his banquet-

ing hall.

Forest sounds accompany the visitor on his trip through Robin's Sherwood. When the birds are not singing, the strains of a minstrel with his lute tell of the strange wedding at arrow-point of Alan-a-Dale and his true love, and to celebrate the pardoning of England's greatest outlaw, the minstrels from their gallery pour forth cheerful music.

Inspiration for the exhibition was drawn from some of the earliest recorded sources of the legend, and chiefly from 'A Geste of Robyn Hode' in which we meet some of his most famous henchmen and, of course, the dastardly Sheriff of Nottingham. The Geste provides much of the very sparse text and is fun to read, blending as it does, even in slightly modernised form, with the medieval tone of the overall experience.

A total experience is what the exhibition quite deliberately sets out to achieve. It aims to give a vivid concept of the Robin Hood ethos using visual, aural and tactile experiences to the full. It quite deliberately avoids historical arguments, and ignores glaring anachronisms. Apart from a wall panel of details at the end, for the benefit of anyone wishing to explore the legend and the history in more detail, there is little to deflect the mind from plain enjoyment into the more tortuous paths of 'education'.

The exhibition was conceived in the belief that through enjoyment comes the kind of concept formation which provides the very bricks from which knowledge is built. How often do we look back on our own development and find that whole new areas of exploration have been opened up for us by a single visual experience, or by one chance remark overheard at a moment when the imagination was at its most receptive? It was felt that education need not be the result of a steady input of orderly facts over a specific period of time, but something which evolves gradually throughout life. An attempt was made, therefore, to fire the imagination, rather than to educate, and the few paragraphs of factual information that are included serve merely to sketch in the medieval

social background.

Visitor centres, along with stately homes, museums and the like, are becoming an increasingly important part of the leisure industry. If the visitor stops and looks, and is drawn into an exhibition by its interesting theme, he will want to follow it up, but he will do it in his own time, as the mood takes him. It was felt that Mr Average and his family, arriving in Sherwood Forest innocently anticipating a leisured day of restful pleasure should not be channelled into a compulsory learning situation and bombarded with arguments for and against Robin Hood as a factual character in history, or some equally taxing and insoluble problem. The average brain cannot assimilate large quantities of written information in a short space of time, and much of what is read will be quickly forgotten, so the 'book on the wall' approach was deliberately avoided.

If the imagination or the intellect can be stimulated, at whatever level, a desire for further knowledge should result. It is this stimulation that the new Robin Hood exhibition sets out to achieve. Since many of the captions are extracts from what are assumed to be works of fiction, namely the Robin Hood ballads, it does not matter if what they tell is soon forgotten, but perhaps they may alert a visitor to the pleasures of early poetry. Similarly, the listener will not hear all the verses of The Ballad

of Robin Hood and Alan-a-Dale, but he may buy the soundtrack L.P. in the souvenir shop if the tunes he has heard briefly make him want to hear more.

The souvenir shop does, in fact, play a very important role in extending the visitor's appreciation of the site. It carries varied stocks of publications on aspects of natural history, but because of the sparsity of written information in the exhibition, its role in extending knowledge on the theme of Robin Hood is vital. Publications are available for the historian as well as the schoolchild, and among souvenirs such as Robin Hood T-shirts and bookmarks, can be found coloured posters and period music and poetry. Souvenirs may remind the visitor of a pleasant afternoon, and he may be induced to return and extend the experience on other occasions, gradually building up his store of Robin Hood knowledge.

'Robyn Hode and Mery Scherewode' aims to capture the attention and hold it just long enough to entertain. If it succeeds, its visitors will eventually know a great deal about the outlaw and his period without having 'learnt' a thing.

The exhibition was produced by the Romm Doulton Organisation Ltd.,
Designed by Ken Bridgman
A/V by Peter Paul
Music by Sherwood Rise

Mountbatten Exhibition

David McCabe, Senior Designer,
Robin Wade Design Associates.

In 1978 Robin Wade Design Associates were asked to design a small exhibition about the life of Earl Mountbatten of Burma. The brief was part of an overall plan (prepared by Montagu Ventures Ltd) for the opening of Broadlands, Lord Mountbatten's home in Hampshire, to the public in April 1979. The exhibition was extremely modest in scale occupying 400 square feet in the final two rooms of the visitors' route round the house. It was expected that this would be replaced by a more comprehensive exhibition in several years or after Lord Mountbatten's eventual death. Tragically this occurred only three months after Broadlands was opened to the public.

At the end of 1979 the Mountbatten family asked us to start work again on a major biographical exhibition to open to the public in April 1981. Having been asked to proceed, we employed Sally Rousham, a freelance interpretive planner and writer who has worked with Robin Wade Design Associates on several projects including the original Mountbatten exhibition. A detailed feasibility study was first carried out to examine the various alternatives for having an exhibition of about 2,500 square feet within the confines of the seventeenth-century stable block at Broadlands. This study was undertaken in conjunction with Messrs. Austin & Wyatt, the estate surveyors. One condition was that the stable block had to retain its traditional role of housing horses, tack and staff. Within the exhibition area the major requirements were general display area, a high-security display area, an audio-visual theatre to seat sixty people, a shop and an adequate entrance circulation area. There was to be minimum supervision.

Two proposals were put to the client. The first was to pull out completely one whole section of the stable block, expose the original brick walls,

restore the fine original oak beams and rafters, and insert a new first floor and double staircase. The second proposal was to alter existing walls on the ground floor and convert two existing staff flats on the first floor into an exhibition space. As designers we preferred the former, the alternative of having to work within the confines of a series of pokey 1950's domestic interiors with small staircases and low ceilings was somewhat uninspiring. However, the massive cost of restoring the remaining features of the stable block persuaded our client to choose the latter alternative. Expressed in film producers' jargon by Lord Brabourne, we were asked to put the money "on the screen". This request imposed planning restrictions and left us with few options. We had to use two existing narrow staircases, one up and one down, and to create a large enough area for an audio-visual theatre downstairs. This necessitated removing some structural walls. Upstairs, as many non-structural walls as possible were removed, the two flats did not even have the same floor level and ramps had to be made from one to the other. All this work was undertaken by Austin & Wyatt

Viceroy and vicereine seen through HMS Kelly corridor. photo: Martin Charles



as architects, and at one stage it appeared that it would have been easier to remove everything and start from scratch. The exhibition was constructed by Norton Display Ltd whom we have used often, and their level of skill and commitment to the project was crucial to the successful completion of the exhibition to schedule.

In retaining only the essentials of the former interior, the displays formed a completely new environment (for reasons of conservation and security only one window remained open to the outside world). It therefore seemed appropriate to introduce different atmospheres, to supplement and enhance otherwise unexciting material, particularly where the exhibits themselves seemed unable to convey their importance in the story. For example, the exhibits relating to Mountbatten's time in H.M.S. Kelly consisted mainly of shrapnel trophies mounted on silver cigarette boxes. Around such obscure items we designed a complete ship's corridor using real hardware from a ship wrecker's yard, the showcase being formed by an actual bridge window. However, the "rivetted steel plate" was nothing more protective than 3-ply painted! In other areas such as the Robe Room where the exhibits were very splendid, we played down the surroundings; the brilliant robes and uniforms are displayed against a sombre grey and the decorations on naval uniform fabric.

As visitors to the exhibition do not have to pay a separate entry fee, there is no control point. A visitor can choose to see the house first or the exhibition depending on the length of the queues. Likewise, the layout of the exhibition, follows a prescribed route but there is freedom to bypass certain parts. The visitor can choose to see the A/V show at the beginning or end of the exhibition or miss it altogether and go upstairs to the start of the exhibition. A wheelchair can get all round the ground floor (shop, A/V, and Robe Room), but few disabled people can get up or down the steep narrow staircases - this was inevitable once our second proposed plan had been accepted by the client.

We decided to present Mountbatten's life in a series of chronological highlights rather than attempting to

cover the whole of such a long and complicated story. Alongside his career we presented his life with Edwina and her own remarkable career, his sporting interests, his children and grandchildren.

Although this was to be a memorial exhibition put on by his own family, there was no question of hagiography. However, a biographical exhibition does present special problems of interpretation. Mountbatten's childhood in the golden days of Edwardian England and Tsarist Russia is rich in three dimensional and graphic material which can be effectively displayed to please the current vogue for "temps perdu". On the other hand, perhaps the most important work he ever undertook was the unification of the three services and his time as Chief of Defence Staff (C.D.S.); this generated vast quantities of paper and a few photographs of committee meetings; not exactly rivetting exhibits. His less significant but more glamorous posts as Colonel of the Life Guards and Commandant of the Royal Marines were easier to handle because we were able to obtain Mountbatten's uniforms for display. The archives of Broadlands contain many documents of great historical interest but with little immediate dramatic appeal. We limited our choice to a few brief and simple documentary exhibits (important letters from Churchill, Eisenhower, etc.) that can be quickly read and appreciated. Some of the most dramatic moments of Mountbatten's life, when he was on combat duty in the Second World War, have few exhibits because most of them are on the bottom of the Mediterranean.

The first part of the exhibition deals with Mountbatten's life until the Second World War - starting with his parents and the Battenberg connections with the reigning families of Europe. The childhood exhibits are displayed in a set-piece suggesting an Edwardian nursery. A Victorian ship treatment with a photographic backdrop of a Spithead review to the background to his early career - which includes the Admiral of the Fleet uniform belonging to his father, Prince Louis of Battenberg. Special treatment is given to a showcase to suggest the 1920's with Art Deco velvet-wrapped shapes combined with black vitrolite



Early Naval Career

photo: Martin Charles

glass and mirror - the exhibits are mainly extravagant presents exchanged by Edwina and Dickie. Contrasting with this, the section about polo is displayed against a background like the existing stable walls - cream gloss painted boarding. One large showcase contains no fewer than 110 trophies won by Lord Mountbatten set simply on painted wood shelves to resemble the tack room with saddles, polo sticks, and other polo paraphernalia.

The visitor then passes through the ship corridor (referred to above) into an area related to the jobs undertaken by Mountbatten during and immediately after the war. This whole section is wrapped in army-surplus canvas tenting, one part actually forming a tent showcase to display items about South-East Asia Command and the Japanese surrender. The centre piece of this area is dressed sculptured figures of Lord and Lady Mountbatten as the Viceroy and Vicereine of India.

The setting suggests the throne-room dais with swagged velvet curtains. To

gain extra height the ceiling was cut to form a dome over the dais. The next section of the display takes Mountbatten's career through the 1950's, 60's and 70's to his retirement and assassination. The exhibits are fairly low-key - the most dramatic being the Life Guard's and Marine's uniforms, the most poignant the family snaps taken the day before he died. The final showcase contains the gold stick, sword of honour, and admiral's hat which rested on Lord Mountbatten's coffin during the funeral ceremony, they are arranged on the Union Jack which draped the coffin.

After going downstairs the visitor enters the 'Robe Room' which has already been mentioned. The most important ceremonial robes are displayed - the Garter, Bath, and the Royal Victorian order. On entering, the visitor is confronted by a sculptured figure of Mountbatten dressed in his Admiral of the Fleet uniform wearing appropriate decorations. A set-piece display includes the Earl and

Countess's robes on sculptured figures wearing most of the decorations and jewellery they wore at the coronation of Queen Elizabeth II. The remaining robes are dressed on traditional tailor's dummies to avoid confronting the visitor with more than one sculptured head of Mountbatten in one view. To balance this grandness, an Edwardian wardrobe displays a variety of his favourite informal clothes. The visitor goes out into the general circulation area and shop and can see the A/V show or continue on to visit the house.

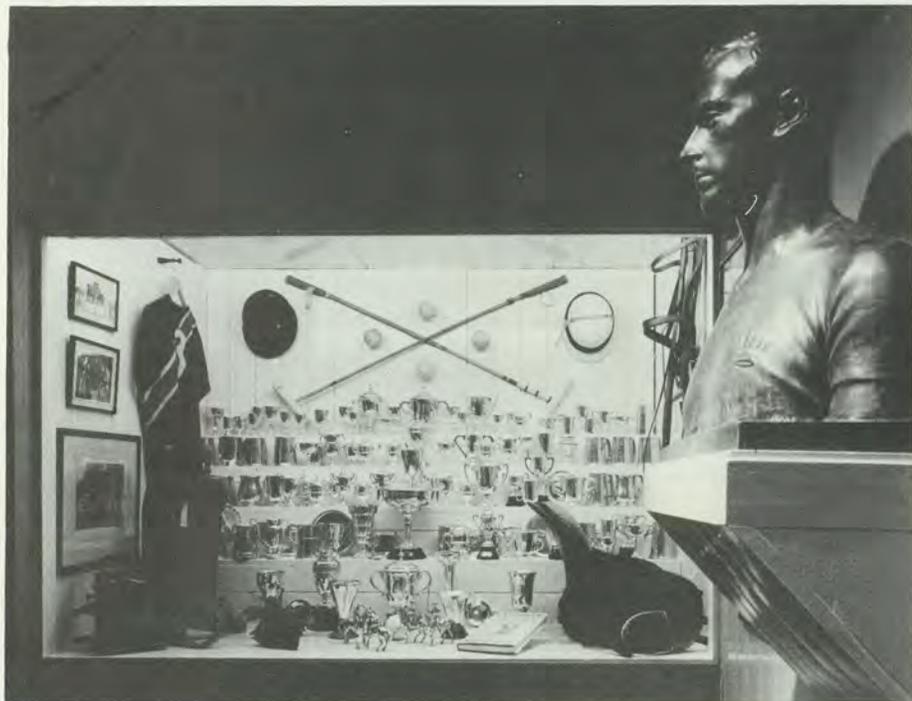
The Mountbatten family was very pleased with the exhibition and so far visitor reaction has been uniformly favourable. The displays and finishes were designed to a high standard - with over 200,000 visitors to Broadlands each summer considerable wear and tear had to be allowed for. The sheer number of visitors expected meant that we had to avoid congestion wherever possible in the limited space

available and to ventilate the exhibition area efficiently while retaining security.

The majority of visitors to the exhibition are unusually interested in the subject - the Mountbattens made contact with so many thousands of people during their lives all of whom remember even the briefest encounter vividly; ex-servicemen in particular are very quick to spot the minutest inaccuracy. Visitors who are only interested in the house can skip the exhibition altogether. The number of words on graphics panels have been kept to an absolute minimum, but as the twentieth century wears on many younger visitors will be more ignorant of the context of Lord Mountbatten's life so it will be interesting to see how he is regarded and understood by future generations. Our exhibition reflects the attitudes of 1980 to the life of a popular hero soon after his assassination.

Polo trophies

photo: Martin Charles



Risley Moss/ Warrington

Ian Parkin, Warrington Development Corporation

RISLEY MOSS - THE FIRST YEAR

David Bellamy and Reg Hookway were very flattering when they opened Risley Moss to the general public on 23 September 1980 ... "one of the best facilities of its kind ..." said David Bellamy, ... "you should aim at 250,000 visitors a year ..." recommended Reg Hookway. We were not sure what to expect: we had set our target of 50,000 visitors and hoped that such a number would not destroy the quality of the site or frighten away the wildlife we had so painstakingly worked for over the previous five years.

The first weekend attracted 2,000 visitors - the centre was inundated - people seemed to like the place - films and guided walks were organised.

Throughout the winter we averaged 600-700 visitors every Sunday; the guided walks programme was a success; a Young Ornithologist Club was formed; a bird feeding-station attracted woodpeckers for every school party on demand (and as many as 20 other species) and a series of evening talks and films were well attended. School visits built up slowly - teacher courses were a useful introduction - by Easter some 35,000 visitors had been counted entering the visitor centre.

The Summer programme included craft demonstrations, midnight and dawn walks and a wide range of more convenient events; school visits increased and many holiday events were organised for children. The New Director of the Countryside Commission visited in August and expressed his satisfaction that the Commission had been so financially involved in the project. He also remarked that it was the cleanest countryside site he had visited!

Two questionnaire surveys were carried out during the Summer: the first was an evaluation package, produced by



Risley Moss Visitor Centre

photo: John Mills

David Uzzell at the University of Surrey, to monitor the effectiveness of the interpretation in the Visitor Centre and on the site. This package was initially produced for the Forestry Commission who kindly gave their agreement to allow us to adapt it for Risley Moss. The Countryside Commission made an invaluable contribution by financially supporting the exercise. The results of the survey will be discussed at the SIBH Winter Meeting on 12 December 1981.

The second confirmed our suspicions that we have many repeat visitors who do not always use the visitor centre. In fact during the summer months we found that only about two thirds of visitors entering the site use the centre. This may well change during the wetter cold winter months.

The statistics for our first year's operation are very interesting:

Visitors entering visitor centre:
65,696

Estimated total visitors to site:
85,000 - 90,000

School and other visits:
206 involving 5,104 people

Organised events and activities:
110 involving 2,181 people

Takings from shop:
£8,702

Takings from vending machine:
£3,277

Takings from events:
£184

Apart from the fact that visitor numbers were well above our initial estimate it is pleasing to report that there is little or no evidence of deterioration in the site due to visitor pressure and our site management work has actually increased the number of bird species. This reflects great credit on the Ranger Service who take great pride in the site immediately repairing any damaged artifacts and removing litter almost before it is dropped!

We have many ideas for the immediate future: the winter interpretive programme is already underway; we hope to produce more on-site interpretation at the observation tower and hid-

es and would like to create a peat-cutting exhibit. We are also conscious that we will have to work harder in the second year to keep the visitors we have attracted. However, evidence suggests we are on the right track.

LOW-KEY INTERPRETATION IN WARRINGTON

Excluding Risley Moss - the subject of a separate report it is estimated that the Park Ranger Service achieved face to face contact with a staggering 23,000 people over the past 12 months as part of their organised activities programme: and this does not take into account the normal day to day contact with park users and the growing number of enrolled Ranger Helpers.

The Ranger service was established in January 1979 under a Manpower Services Commission STEP scheme with four prime aims:

a) To be a 'presence' in the parks minimising unauthorised activities and working with park users.

b) to provide a service to schools and thereby maximising the use of the parks for education purposes.

c) to work with and for the community in establishing a wide range of events and activities to encourage the adult population to use the parks.

d) to provide a wide range of interpretation and information to all age groups of the general public.

The raison d'être of the service is on the one hand to protect, and on the other, to maximise the value of the investment in Landscape and open space within the town (amounting to over £1 million per year).

The immediate success of the scheme was reflected in the fact that by the end of the initial 12 month 'pilot scheme' six full time rangers were appointed operating in three teams of two at Birchwood, Sankey Valley and Woolston Parks. Contact with schools and children were easily established and a wide range of low key activities were laid on for children at weekends and during school holidays: their willingness to become involved lead to the concept of Ranger Helpers - essentially children who are prepared to

undertake jobs for the Ranger for the greater good of the park. Woolston Park has over 1,500 signed up helpers alone! Contact with the adult population is more difficult and time-consuming: the children are an ideal starting point, but an increasing number of events and activities have been developed with and for the community. These range from fetes or fairs to sporting events: sponsored or charity events have proved successful and a mock civil war battle (living history) was enacted across Spittle Brook; but in all cases the concept of drawing people of all ages into the park is the prime aim.

During the summer of 1981 a pilot 'voluntary ranger' scheme was set up with the intention of involving interested members of the local community in assisting the rangers with their duties, mainly patrolling and information provision. Eight volunteers are now working a flexible hours system which is proving to be of benefit both in terms of increasing the ranger coverage on the ground and of making in-roads towards involving the community in the parks.

The work with schools is enhanced by an Environmental Education Unit who operate 'whole town' producing a wide range of resource material for schools 'on demand'. Often they work closely with the rangers and during the 1980/81 academic year some 250 specific visits, talks, walks or other activities were carried out with schools. Obviously, time and staff resources place a ceiling on the extent of this work, but there is no reason why a considerable increase cannot be achieved over the next twelve months.

At the same time the Rangers have found the uniformed groups e.g. cubs, scouts, brownies, guides, boys brigade etc., most anxious to use the rangers as teachers, advisors and testers for 'badge work' and more practical exercises in the parks. Last year a group of venture scouts built a temporary timber bridge across a derelict canal to enable school groups easy access to an isolated area for an extensive tree planting exercise.

A major programme of walks and talks has been launched 'whole town' on a wide range of subjects from natural

history and heritage subjects to such things as water divining and ghosts! The response has been little short of fantastic: most of the events involve volunteer leaders or speakers and we have established a booking system to ensure that only a reasonable number - averaging 25 - can attend with all thereby maximising their enjoyment of the occasion. The winter programme was aimed at holding a weekday evening talk followed by a weekend walk, both on the same subject, approximately fortnightly throughout the winter months. A range of subjects were chosen with varying success but there is no doubt that local history and heritage subjects proved the most successful. People seem to be thirsting for knowledge at present.

The summer programme incorporated some 67 walks from 2 May - 31 October and it is estimated that some 1,200 attended. Most walks were around 3 miles long and attracted people (92% were car owners) travelling up to 5 miles to join the walk. Some 40% were attending walks for the first time although over 20% proved a regular 'hard-core' attending over 7 walks during the season.

An innovation that worked was a series of canal cruises along the Bridgewater Canal which sold out five times over; one that failed was a guided 'push' for the disabled. Our publicity involves an attractive poster, local press and radio and word of mouth: the poster and 'friends' proved the most responsive.

We also launched two theme 'weeks' - one on birds and one on waterways - where we put together a programme of talks, walks, films and school-based work for a concentrated period of seven days. Each was successful achieving face to face contact with well over 1,000 children and adults during the week. Both ideas will be developed further next year with the obvious linkage of 'waterways' to Maritime Year!

A Farm Open Day, having a 'pick your own' farm, was also arranged, although the Late Spring led to more people 'picking' than learning and experiencing the farm. Next year we are looking to a dairy farm and MAFF and the NFU are already active in the pre-

planning.

Lastly, a series of nature days and childrens workshops were run throughout the year: in some ways similar to Operation Woodpecker; the Rangers took the children bird watching, bark rubbing, leaf and seed collecting etc., and also undertaking some of the 'nature games' promoted by Steve Van Matre and Joseph Correll - with considerable success I might say. During the summer months a programme of street theatre and children's outdoor shows supplement the nature days. Assistance has been provided by the North West Arts promotion network in providing this programmes.

Is the overall programme a success? We are very conscious that we are only scratching the surface, but the evid-

ence is minimal vandalism, a growing interest (and maybe even understanding) in nature, landscape and the countryside, and busy, active parks and open spaces.

With the assistance of the MSC we have doubled the size of the service, and with the Environmental Education Unit we can expect to gain access to many more school children. We believe the process of education must continue for at least a generation to have a lasting effect, but with an operating budget of only £8,000 p.a. we think the results are on the right lines.

If anybody is working on the same lines we would be delighted to compare notes. I would also welcome any comments, criticism or suggestions.

Letter

Andrew Millward (Manchester Museum)

After reading Terry Robinson's Conference Report (Interpretation No. 18) I felt that I must answer his comments regarding the Boat Museum, Ellesmere Port. "... that in majoring on boats, the Museum was missing a chance to tell a much bigger story about Ellesmere Port itself."

The museum is not an interpretation centre for the town, it is in fact the largest collection of inland and estuarial waterways craft in existence and is just as relevant to Stourport, Gloucester, London or Runcorn or any of the other ports where narrow and wide boats interchanged cargo. Also it is not just about boats, we have

large collections of painted ware, social history and archival material much of which will be fully displayed in our newly to be restored Island warehouse opening at Easter 1982. Over the last six years due to lack of space we have adopted a policy of changing exhibitions in the toll House which has included a display on the development of Ellesmere Port.

Also we have commissioned and published a fascinating small work entitled "Ellesmere Port - Canal Town" by Adrian Jarvis available from the Boat Museum price 50p.

The new exhibition will include a considerable section on Ellesmere Port, its origins and growth. We look forward to another visit from S.I.B.H. when we are fully open and they can judge for themselves our involvement with the town.

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

A 'Treasures of Britain' book, retail price £1.00.
Publication 14 May 1981. Pitkin Pictorials Ltd
Over 60 illustrations, colour on every page.

32 pages, size 250 mm x 178 mm.

'William Wordsworth' is the first full-colour guide to the life and works of this famous Lakeland poet. Atmospheric photographs of his favourite haunts, together with beautiful reproductions of paintings by his contemporaries, emphasize the profound influence that nature had on his writings. Portraits of his family and friends and pictures of his homes all help the reader to imagine precisely the kind of life he led. The striking front-cover portrait by William Shuter of the poet as a young man was especially obtained from America and is reproduced in colour for the first time.

Ronald Sands, the author, is a graduate in English Literature and now works as Assistant Director of Brockhole, the National Park Centre in Windermere. He lectures extensively on the Lake District and has become an expert in its literary associations as well as in its conservation.

Wordsworth by Henry Edridge, by kind permission of the Trustees of Dove Cottage



Automatic Vending of Printed Matter

Philip Eden, Countryside Commission

From the regular flow of enquiries received by the Countryside Commission there can be no mistaking the need for a financially viable machine which can vend printed matter reliably. The vending of snacks, drinks and cigarettes etc is commonplace yet there is no machine suitable for the information industry. The leaflet, map, brochure, guide, pamphlet and booklet all have certain advantages over other forms of communication: eg they have a degree of permanence; they can be used anywhere; they can be studied at a chosen speed; they can be profit-making and so on. It follows that the countryside interpreter cannot ignore the ubiquitous leaflet.

In 1975 the Commission embarked on an experiment designed to fill this need - collecting orders from interested parties and sponsoring a manufacturer in the automatic vending business to produce a machine. The project floundered, mainly for technical reasons, so recently the Commission instigated a study to draw on this experience and assess the extent of the problems, both management and technical, of the various options available.

Clearly, material offered for sale from the right spot at the right time has the best chance of doing the job it was designed for. It is in this area particularly that a successful leaflet dispenser could be of great potential value to its clients and its owner, so what are the options?

Options

1. Free issue of printed matter.

This can be the cheapest way of distributing material though obviously it is confined to that which is inexpensive and cannot be self-financing (unless it stimulates sales.) Disadvantages are:

- Staff/volunteers needed to hand out material or replenish supplies;
- material available on a help-

yourself basis is liable to abuse by vandals;

c. free material is more likely to become litter;

d. 'give-aways' are less likely to be read and appreciated by some clientele.

2. *Honesty boxes.* With this system leaflets are made available from a suitably sheltered open box and a notice invites the public to help themselves, depositing the cost of the material in a suitably secure coin box. Operation is simple though servicing, ie replenishing stocks and emptying the coin box, is still necessary.

Again, the honesty box is only suitable for very inexpensive material, and on very selective sites. While most of the time the system undoubtedly appeals to the 'better nature' of the vast majority of people, the fact that it only requires abuse from a minute proportion of people to sabotage it, must account for the fact that the system is not widely used except occasionally in churches and similar places. It is a sad fact that even these institutions are not immune from the attentions of the vandal or thief.

A comprehensive survey of the use of honesty boxes has not been carried out but a number of informal enquiries have revealed much the same story and have given rise to the following general observations:

- the incidence of vandalism makes honesty boxes more trouble than they are worth;
- people are tending to become less honest (a number of claims of "about 50% honesty" have been received).

It follows that if honest users have to make good the losses, more people tend to dishonesty because the goods offer poorer value for money.

3. Vending machines

Management problems

Vending machines too have to be managed. They must be filled with the material to be sold and maybe with coin change; the money collected must be emptied and the machine checked for faultless operation, damage and abuse. They must be sited where they

will be seen by their clients yet be unobtrusive and out of the way of vandals. Most vending machines currently available require shelter.

Machines require routine maintenance, repairs and should be kept clean. A coat of paint may be needed from time to time. Batteries may need to be changed. They should be financially viable.

Technical problems

Top of the list of technical problems when vending leaflets or other thin paper documents mechanically, is the mechanical handling of them - the actual dispensing of individual items. The main reason for this is the varying friction and stiction between the items due to different materials and changing atmospheric conditions. This can be overcome by packaging the goods in suitable material eg foil or plastic, but this results in problems of litter and increased cost. Alternatively, the leaflets can be loaded individually into receptacles, compartments or pockets within the machine, but the penalty with large volume sales is the length of time needed to load the machine. Another major problem concerns the material being vended. Paper and card, while not unduly affected by temperature, are affected by humidity; a fact which must be taken into account when vending machines are to be used out of doors. A machine might shed water but it is normally impractical to guard against the ingress of damp air or the formation of condensation. A good design will allow for these factors, and ensure that the machine will work in spite of them.

Criteria for ideal equipment design.

- a. reliable, rugged vandal-resistant design;
- b. unaffected by weather;
- c. able to accommodate a wide variety of paper or card surface finishes;
- d. comprehensive facilities for price alteration by operator;
- e. coin acceptor should be fail-safe and foreign bodies should not obstruct passage of correct coin;
- f. coin lockout should operate when machine is empty or faulty;

- g. good coin security and simple secure collection facilities;
- h. simple bulk loading of leaflets and coin change;
- i. simple servicing and minimal maintenance;
- j. change giving facilities;
- k. cost should be recoverable within a reasonably short period.

Other desirable, though less important features:

- l. ability to handle different sizes and thickness of documents;
- m. machine should be user powered though this should not preclude the use of low current electronic coin selectors;
- n. design should be simple, functional and unobtrusive.

The degree to which the above criteria need apply depends upon the site for the machine. The requirements for a machine vending printed matter sited indoors adjacent to a manned information counter in a visitor centre are obviously not so stringent as those used at a remote unmanned site out of doors. Furthermore electrical power might be conveniently available in the former case though not in the latter.

Commercial Equipment

There is no equipment currently available commercially which meets enough of the criteria mentioned to make it worthy of recommendation. The nearest is an Italian postcard vending machine, available from Coin-age (Bristol) Ltd. At around £200 it is capable of selling 6 different cards at anything from 3p to 10p each. Its main problems are that it only holds 45 of each of its 6 different cards maximum and it would need to be installed under some sort of shelter. Additionally, a small amount of maintenance is required at every reload. This machine, which is apparently only reliable with glossy cards, would probably work satisfactorily when used indoors under supervision, given the necessary maintenance. But, although it uses no electrical power, its use in remote outdoor situations would probably not prove to be sufficiently reliable largely due to deterioration of the cards through dampness.

It is thought that the dearth of suitable equipment is mainly due to the technical difficulties outlined which necessarily result in expensive machines which in turn restricts their sale to users whose merchandise give a high profit margin.

A new approach

The technical difficulties associated with dispensing thin paper or card documents automatically with any degree of reliability from normal run-of-the-mill moderately priced dispensers working in outdoor conditions are many. The problems outlined earlier caused by climatic variations alone, cannot be overcome without elaborate and costly engineering solutions, or alternatively by packaging the document in cost-increasing discardable material. An answer to this problem is to design the material to be dispensed with mechanical handling in

mind and standardise on it. This would require material to be produced to a standard size, be dimensionally stable, be at least ½mm thick, be non-hygroscopic and thus relatively unaffected by long-term storage.

The plastic card, or suitably encapsulated paper 'card', fills these requirements admirably and has other advantages too. Such a card could be made a high quality, attractive, collectable item which could be used in any weather. It would need to be a convenient size for pocket or handbag and could be sold at a profit for about 20p. Obviously space on it would be limited and it is anticipated that such cards would be sold in series (eg associated with districts or interests) which would stimulate the collection of sets. This could result in a very effective and lucrative method of providing information.

Diploma for Wardens and Rangers

C.J. Smith

Merrist Wood Agricultural College, Worplesdon, Guildford, Surrey.

Introduction

With as many as 37 million people now resorting to the countryside in search of informal recreation every year in England and Wales alone (1), there is a greater need than ever before to cater for these visitors, both in their own interests and in those of the countryside itself, including the people who live and work there. The challenging responsibility of encouraging the enjoyment of the nation's rural heritage, while simultaneously safeguarding its well-being, is falling increasingly to countryside warden and ranger services.

The idea of wardens and rangers is not new: both formed an integral part of the hierarchy for the administration of the Forest Laws of Norman England - for example on Cranborne Chase (2).

However, it was the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act of 1949 which led to the first formal recognition in Britain of the need for an organised ranger service in the modern sense, and this was taken further by the provisions of the Countryside Act of 1968, under which the Countryside Commission itself was established. Some 500 men and women are now in full-time employment in National and Country Parks and other open spaces, and this figure does not include those whose prime concern is with nature conservation (3). Incidentally, the Countryside Commission is promoting the wider application of the title "ranger" (4), although this is likely to take time, and for the moment it remains customary, if cumbersome, to refer to the "warden/ranger".

The importance of extending and consolidating the skills of serving wardens and rangers and of providing basic training for school leavers and others intending to make a career of countryside management had long been recognised, and this at last showed signs of becoming a reality when the Commission began to encourage the establishment of courses specifically for the purpose in the early 1970's. Merrist Wood Agricultural College became involved at an early stage of

these developments, and with the co-operation of the Department of Education and Science and the Joint Committee for National Awards in Agricultural Subjects, the first, and still the only, Ordinary National Diploma (OND) course in Countryside Recreation was launched by the College's Countryside Department in September 1977. The first group of students qualified in July 1980, and the course is already fully subscribed for its fifth intake in September 1981.

The OND Course in Countryside Recreation

The course spans three years and is organised so that three phases of college-based studies alternate with two separate periods of full-time employment in the field - the so-called "industrial" or "sandwich" placements. The curriculum incorporates three major themes:-

(1) The expansion and consolidation of the candidate's fundamental knowledge of ecology, rural history and the natural sciences, and the application of all these to agriculture, forestry, landscape architecture, nature conservation and other aspects of countryside management.

(2) The development of practical skills in, for example, estate carpentry, fencing, gate-hanging, hedging and ditching, footpath and step construction, tree-planting and maintenance, livestock handling and the like. Emphasis is placed both on traditional crafts and on the use of modern machinery, such as chain-saws, hand-winches and tractor-mounted equipment.

(3) The encouragement of a concern for people in the countryside, whether resident or visiting, at work or at play. The student comes to appreciate the challenging role of the warden/ranger in recognising and reconciling the often conflicting interests and demands of farmers, walkers, anglers, foresters, botanists, aeromodellers, gamekeepers, caravanners, horse riders and the rest, on the rural ecosystem and on each other. Here are included aspects of human relations, environmental education, the dissemination of information, countryside law and economics, as well as basic training in first-aid, life-saving and other facets of health and

safety.

In order to ensure adequate depth in so wide a range of topics, full use is made of the expertise and facilities offered by our colleagues in other departments at Merrist Wood - Agriculture, Nursery Practices, Landscape Construction, Arboriculture, Science and Machinery - as well as specialists from outside the College who either play host to us on their home ground, or join us in the lecture room or laboratory at Merrist Wood. These include field, advisory and research staff from Surrey County, Guildford Borough and Waverley (Godalming) District Councils, the Agricultural Development and Advisory Service, the National Farmers' Union, the Soil Survey of England and Wales, the National Trust, the Nature Conservancy Council, Surrey Trust for Nature Conservation, the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, the Thames Water Authority, the Forestry and Countryside Commissions, and many others.

Wherever feasible, practical instruction and project work are carried out on the College's attractive 283-ha estate and in its immediate environs to north and south of the Hog's Back. Last year, for example, work on ecological surveying and woodland management was tied in with an assessment of the flora and fauna of the Merrist Wood estate by the Surrey Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group. In another exercise, neglected footpaths on the estate were located and cleared, stiles repaired, a robust footbridge constructed and signs and waymarks refurbished. Away from the campus eroded heathland at Frensham Common has been restored through the construction of steps and the re-planting of heather cuttings rooted at the College. This year, our students are to build and hang gates for the College Farm, and have been asked to instal rustic seats for Worplesdon Parish Council. Juniper cuttings are being raised in an attempt to reverse the decline of this species on the chalk scarp of the North Downs east of Guildford.

Opportunities for contact with school-children arise through the Countryside Department's Schools Liaison unit, which maintains a careers advisory

service for secondary schools and arranges day visits to the College Farm and Woodlands for middle-school children. Contact with the general public comes from involvement in agricultural shows and rallies, as well as from helping with exhibitions at Merrist Wood itself, and with the constant round of interviewees, organised parties and other visitors.

The Sandwich Placements

We have been extremely fortunate in securing the co-operation of a host of authorities and organisations who are now providing our students with industrial experience. The cost of this is usually offset by a grant by the Countryside Commission. Many of the authorities noted above in connection with course-work are involved, as well as their more far-flung counterparts with equally strong countryside commitments through Country Parks, Local Nature Reserves, Heritage Coasts or Urban Fringe Projects. The Manchester valleys - Tame, Medlock, Mersey and Croal-Irwell for example - have provided particularly challenging experiences of the rescue of neglected and derelict countryside and the re-awakening of interest and involvement in its restoration and conservation. The Lake District, Brecon Beacons and Dartmoor National Parks, the Welsh and Southern Water Authorities, the Game Conservancy and the Highland Regional Council, as well as a number of private estates, are further bodies with whom we have established extremely rewarding links.

The value of these placements is seen most revealingly when the students return to College. Everyone has, of course, to turn in a written report for grading, and in addition his or her performance during the period of sandwich employment is formally assessed by the employer on our behalf. Teaching staff, moreover, visit each student at least once during their placement. But it is the sheer enthusiasm with which the rich harvest of experience is regaled that is so striking, and weekly seminars have now been introduced into the curriculum for the express purpose of covering sandwich reports.

Here, we learn of the nature of the work, the daily or weekly routine, the often colourful characters with whom

the students have worked or come into contact, the rich terminology and fascinating skills of rural craftsmen, the highlights, the darker moments, the bizarre events and the sober reflections. We hear about "slubbing out the lodes" (dredging the dykes) at Wicken Fen ... restoring the dewpond at Newtimber Hill (with help from local prisoners)... rounding up cattle on the Ouse Washes... reconstructing for Cambridge schoolchildren the original appearance of the great Iron Age hill-fort at Wandlebury ... coping with pony-trekkers in the Brecon Beacons... reasoning with treasure-seekers at Yateley... horse-riders at Frensham... motorcyclists at Chobham... campers at Cissbury Ring.. Nic's discovery of a crate of acid bottles dumped in a lake used by anglers and bathers (a week before he was shot at and spat at on the same day)... James' hang-glider, found intact but bereft of owner... Phil's first man orchids... Simon's purple emperor... and so on. All this is as enlightening to us, the teaching staff, as it is to the students, and the value of this contact with our colleagues in the field in giving our course its feel of first-hand involvement cannot be overstressed.

The future

Our first students to qualify are now beginning to be absorbed by the industry. We have, for example, a Warden/Forester at an outdoor recreation centre for handicapped youngsters in South Wales, an Assistant Countryside Commission Project Officer in Hertfordshire, a Country Park Ranger with Nottinghamshire County Council, an Assistant Ranger in the Colne Valley Regional Park, Countryside Wardens with Surrey and Hampshire County Councils, and a National Trust Warden in Suffolk. Financial constraints are not making things easy at the moment, though this is a sphere which can only grow stronger in the coming years as the impetus first seen in the early 1970s picks up again. For whatever the economic climate, pressures on the countryside can only increase, and adequate funds must be made available to protect and conserve the countryside through positive and sympathetic management.

It is our fervent hope that O.N.D. Countryside Recreation students from Merrist Wood will play a major part in these developments.

References

(1) Leisure in the Countryside. Publication CCP124 (1979). Countryside Commission, Cheltenham.

Countryside Interpretation in UK, France and Germany

Peter Townsend, Principal, Losehill Hall, Peak National Park Study Centre

Throughout the world today more people are better educated than ever before. Yet conservation and recreation are still in conflict. As technology creates a more complex society, there is need for us to understand some simple truths - to "see the wood for the trees". Rapid change leads us further and further from our social and physical past. What has been and what actually is, are not always easy to understand.

So in this context Interpretation was born ... "an activity designed to further insight, concern, understanding, and appreciation of the processes which have shaped our environment". (1) For present purposes this activity can be stated simply as ... "telling the story of countryside conservation". And in order to do that an audience has to listen. No easy task when you consider the millions who visit for pleasure and recreation, Europe's protected landscapes; whether National or Nature, Park or Reserve.

The philosophy (2) and the techniques (3) of interpretation have been described elsewhere. What I would like to do now, by way of personal example, is outline some of the ways in which Interpreters are telling the story of conservation. The examples are drawn from National Parks and exemp-

(2) Desmond Hawkins (1980). Cranborne Chase. Gollancz, London.

(3) B. Walbank, personal communication.

(4) Countryside Rangers and Related Staff. Advisory Series No. 7 (1979). Countryside Commission, Cheltenham.

lily different (and yet, on occasions, remarkably similar) ways of communicating ideas, exciting curiosity and opening people's minds.

In France the traditional agricultural roots of the population have manifested themselves in the development of the Ecomusée. (4) This is the cultural expression of the many facets of rural life displayed in a museum context for the visiting public. A good example is to be found on Ouessant Island (off the coast of Brittany) in the Parc d'Armorique. In restored and refurbished fishermen's cottages, the visitor can almost feel, taste and smell the hardships of a former peasant way of life on the Atlantic shores. In the Landes de Gascogne Parc Naturel, where pine forests on sandy soil stretch for hundreds of miles south from Bordeaux, can be found the Marqueze Ecomusée. This is a superb restoration of a whole village complex, illustrating the 19th century adaptation to a man-made forest environment. Visitor access is uniquely only by steam train along a restored line once used for hauling timber. The Ecomusée is that happy compromise which caters for and inspires visitors as well as reflecting genuine local cultural traditions.

One of the most simple, striking, consistent yet imaginative, interpretive devices is a symbol, used by each French Parc, in a style designed to incorporate two elements - firstly an eight barred 'star' representing the national federation of Parc Naturels et Régionaux; secondly a variable pictorial representation of a local theme. For example the Parcs de Peims (in Champagne country) used the 'star' alongside the grape. These symbols are used vividly in a number of ways varying from official letter-headings to Parc boundary markers.

'Wanderweg' (Walking Route) is a

countryside phenomenon in Germany. The clearly waymarked path, usually through extensive forest is typical of many of the Naturparke. Because the proportion of forest cover is high and access has traditionally been free, Wanderwege are a good example of environmental determinism. Routes are often graded according to length, steepness and direction - special maps are published and wayside information is common - usually engraved on wooden boards.

The Luneburg Heath Naturschutzgebiet (Nature Reserve and Park) uses such interpretive techniques most effectively. Short routes, starting from strategically placed car parks, lead directly to the popular Wilsede village complex with its restored farm buildings and Heidemuseum. Because of the large number of visitors (estimated four million each year) from the nearby cities of Hamburg, Bremen and Hannover, other grades of path are waymarked which lead the keen rambler into quieter parts of the heath or forest. Because walking is encouraged only on the waymarked footpaths, much of the heath can be protected from man's intrusion.

There is a Wordsworthian tradition (5) in the U.K., that has manifested itself through the written word in a variety of publications, pioneered by National Parks, ranging from Government guide-books, nature trail leaflets, visitor centre booklets to the ever present postcard and even Country Code bookmarks. We also have 'Books on Walls' (text in interpretive displays) which are currently defended in the latest newsletter of the Society for the Interpretation of Britain's Heritage. All publications can be purchased in visitor centres, large and small, which have sprung up in the last ten years. The extraordinary interest shown by the vast visiting urban public (the Peak District has

fifteen million day visits each year) has led to the creation of residential study centres, such as Losehill Hall, where environmental education can be pursued in greater detail and depth. Five out of our ten National Parks now have some form of residential study centre. One exciting new development is the Centre for Environmental Interpretation at Manchester Polytechnic.

Finally then the pattern is similar in the three countries examined. "With the trend to shorter working hours likely to be substantially reinforced by current developments in technology, increased leisure time will place additional pressures on the environment". (1) We as managers of protected landscapes need to regard Interpretation as a serious way of enabling urban man to rediscover those qualities of life - peace and quiet, joy and caring - which are so essential for our future. This is not escapism. Conservation is about positively caring for our resources. Interpretation is telling people all about it. So shout it from your highest hill and whisper it in your deepest dale.

(1) Centre for Environmental Interpretation brochure, Manchester Polytechnic, 1980.

(2) Freeman Tilden, *Interpreting our Heritage*, U.S., 1957

(3) Don Alridge, *Guide to Countryside Interpretation*, H.M.S.O., 1975

(4) Madame L. Balay, *Parks and People Conference Report*, Peak National Park 1978.

(5) "Persons who by their visits (often repeated) to the Lakes in the North of England, testify that they deem the district a sort of National property ... in which every man has a right and interest, who has an eye to perceive and a heart to enjoy". William Wordsworth

Notes from the Forestry Commission

Bob Jones FC Design and Recreation Branch

By way of brief background Design & Recreation Branch performs numerous tasks related to the creation, management and furtherance of the Commission's recreational interests, enterprise and estate. More specifically on the design side there are two disciplines - on one hand the design of forest landscape, on the other the design of amenity and interpretive facilities. We (D&R Branch) are not responsible for the bulk of the Forestry Commission's publications, nor PR aspects. That said, current interpretive projects include the following:

Completion of a small visitor centre at *Bedgebury National Pinetum* in Kent. An original £100,000 "prestige" centre suffered the Government's capital expenditure axe just as we completed architects' drawings. A quick look around revealed an old kennels building which we have now converted into a small seasonally manned facility for a much smaller cost by way of retrieval.

We are also looking at alternative ways of *interpreting the Pinetum*, and are about to install a number of the Countryside Commission developed sound posts as an experiment; if well received we hope to expand the circuit greatly.

We are about to complete an *"interpretive dispersal point"* located at Lynford Stag in the centre of Thetford Forest, intended to promote wider use of the whole forest.

The Branch has been heavily involved in the creation of a carefully landscaped forest holiday cabins scheme (44 units) on the shores of Lochawe in the West of Scotland. We are now following up initial orientation pro-

vision for the cabiners with more permanent information displays, and the whole area is to be carefully studied with regard to walks/trails potential and way-side interpretation opportunities.

On the major visitor centre front we have just commenced the planning for a complete renovation of the *Grizedale Visitor and Wildlife Centre* in the Lake District. This will encompass the complete replacement of the existing interpretive displays, pedestrianisation of large areas of the buildings complex (those identifiable as visitor spaces), re-opening of the original (first in Britain I believe) interpreted forest trail adjacent to the Centre, and the establishment of several "theme" trails throughout the forest.

The *David Marshall Lodge Visitor Centre* in the Trossachs, completely refurbished in the last 2 years, has just won a BTA "Come to Britain" merit certificate.

Throughout Britain this season we have been implementing the *Visitor Centre monitoring/evaluation package* recently developed for us by Professor Terence Lee of Surrey University. The outcome of these effectiveness assessments will no doubt provide much food for thought.

In Wales (mainly the responsibility of Derek Bayliss, as an outstationed member of the Branch) the Forestry Commission's main focal point for visitors to the *Snowdonia Forest Park* moved from Gwydyr Uchaf near Llanrwst to Betws y Coed at Easter when the first stage of the new Royal Oak Stables visitor centre was opened to the public. The building was purchased by the local authority and is being developed by the Snowdonia National Park jointly with the Forestry Commission as a visitor centre. Financial constraints have meant that reconstruction of the long derelict building must be staged, and at present only one wing of the building is open to the public. The Forestry Commission's role at the Royal Oak Stables will be to interpret the forest environs of the village (Betws y Coed is in the heart of Gwydyr Forest) and to encourage the visitor to walk further afield along the ex-

tensive network of forest walks and public footpaths. The centre will also become the reception point for educational visits to the forest and this use of the building will continue through the autumn and winter months when it is closed to the general public. At Newborough, the Commission's *sand*

Interpretation in the Rockies

or WIA going Elk Bugling

David L. Uzzell, University of Surrey

As the plane heads up the Denver runway for the first stage of the flight home, this is a good opportunity to jot down a few notes about the recent joint national workshop of the Association of Interpretive Naturalists (AIN) and the Western Interpreters Association (WIA) held at the YMCA of the Rockies, Estes Park, Colorado in late September.

The majority of participants appeared to be naturalists, but other groups within the interpretation profession were well represented including designers, researchers, administrators and environmental educators of all sorts. There was a tendency for the focus of attention to be on the interpretation of the natural world; this reflected in part the membership interests of AIN/WIA, but also the magnificent location of the conference, situated as it was only a short distance from landscape types as diverse as the Crest Plains to the east and sub-alpine tundra to the west.

The programme was broad enough to appeal to all interests, and as is common with many conferences with simultaneous sessions one felt, as one delegate expressed the idea in a different context, like a mosquito in a nudist camp - one didn't know where to start. The eclecticism of the conference was reflected in many of the paper titles: 'American attitudes, knowledge and behaviour towards wildlife and natural habitats', 'Using consultants effectively', 'Planning a public-

dune forest on Anglesey, the seasonal 'interpretive caravan at the popular beach car park has been replaced by an information point with a simple and direct conservation appeal. Protection of the defensive dune system and conservation of the richly varied plant and bird life is the main objective here.

ity strategy for interpretive programs', 'marketing interpretation', and 'Interpretation as a management strategy'. Of the more overtly practical and/or bizarre: 'Be a better bard - storytelling tricks', 'Gimmicks and Gadgets', 'Theatres as an interpretive tool' and 'The mad herbalist - and Yas Eeña Oyaka!'

For my part there were three sessions which proved to be particularly interesting. The opening session of the conference reflected on the current status of interpretation at Federal level. Senior staff from the National Parks Service, the US Forest Service, the Bureau of Land Management, the US Fish and Wildlife Service, and the Corps of Engineers voiced basically the same message. The new era of Reaganomics has brought about major reductions in public expenditure. Consequently anything enduring and worthwhile such as interpretive services is now being exposed to the same cuts as in this country. Putting a brave face on matters, all stressed that the reduced budgets should be seen as a challenge. It will force interpreters to be more innovative and not to rely, as one speaker put it, on a costume extravaganza that the bi-centennial celebrations encouraged. Dudley Rehder of the Corps of Engineers maintained that if interpretive services are to continue to receive funding then there must be some degree of accountability. Interpreters themselves need to demonstrate the worth of their efforts, and evaluate both the input requirements and the output benefits. In short, are the interpretive objectives being met in the most cost-effective manner?

The second session of interest focused on current research in interpretation. Geoffrey Hayward of the University of Massachusetts provided a state-of-the-art paper assessing

the progress of evaluation research in the United States. He identified four areas in which research is currently taking place: measuring visitors experiences in relation to the objectives of interpretation programmes; the discovery of experimental as well as demographic user groups; the observation of people in their interaction with the environment; and the discovery of average patterns of use. He then went on to suggest three important areas where little or no research is taking place. Firstly, a great deal of research activity has been expended on attitudes rather than behaviour, without looking at the relationship between the two and the way in which one acts upon the other. Secondly, few studies have systematically examined interpretation staff themselves, i.e. how they spend their time, how they and the public see their duties and responsibilities. And thirdly, evaluation studies themselves have often relied on suggestion box comments and letters, rather than more rigorous research methods.

It was clear from Hayward's paper and the presentations, that the evaluation research being undertaken in Britain is not only addressing itself to these issues, but significantly to those issues which are untouched in the U.S. It was particularly appropriate then that Terence Lee should be invited to open the two-day research session, with a paper entitled 'Interpretation Research: Beyond the Quiz Question'. He briefly reviewed the current state of evaluation research in Britain and went on to describe some of the innovative developments in evaluation methodologies at the University of Surrey, which do go beyond the 'quiz question' approach and not only try to suggest relationships between attitudes and behaviour, but also provide scientifically sound and easily administered evaluative tools for interpreters themselves. I opened the second day of the research section with an assessment of the in-depth interviews held with Forestry Commission staff in respect of their understanding and practise of interpretation. This analysis was set within a critique of interpretation which advocates a more participatory relationship between interpreter and visitor. 'Babies and Beasties' sounds an unpro-

missing title for a presentation but it provided for me an introduction to one of the most stimulating themes of the conference. The potential and problems of interpretation for children have largely remained unexplored in this country. For the most part it would appear that interpreters often treat children as simply the junior wing of the adult brigade, providing them essentially with the same, unmodified material as is given to their parents. Here it was being suggested that learning strategies should be child-centred, from which incidentally many adults would also benefit. Gillian Binks in her article on 'Acclimatisation' (Interpretation no. 17) gives an idea of the essence of the approach. Joseph Cornell spoke on 'Nature for a child's heart and mind' and then ran a complementary workshop outside to demonstrate his ideas in practise (see Joseph Cornell's book 'Sharing relative with Children, Ananda Pub, 1979). Eddie Soloway of the Acclimatisation

Experiences Institute led a number of 'ACC walks' such as 'rainbow chips', 'the song of fall' and 'one of a kind' which encourage participants to become more attuned to the natural qualities and rhythms of the environment. As Cornell writes in the introduction to his book each activity 'is a mouth through which nature speaks - sometimes in the language of the scientist, sometimes in that of the artist or mystic'. It should be stressed that this is not some kind of environmentally-oriented feely group: its advocates stress that developing a heightened sensual awareness is not enough in itself. An intuitive understanding of nature must be balanced with a strong scientific background so that feelings can be supported by facts. Thus other activities demonstrate the significance of ecological hierarchies and the web of life.

In the best interpretive tradition there were many opportunities for conference participants to interpret the Rockies themselves be it on field trips to the sub-alpine tundra at 12-13,000 feet or sorties at dusk to hear elk bugling. For those who have not heard this most melodious call of the rutting elk, then the 1982 AIN/WIA conference in Montana might just give you an opportunity.

Ballachulish Visitor Centre

Graham Duffy, Graphic Partners

Graphic Partners, Edinburgh, have been commissioned by Highland Region to design an interpretive exhibition at Ballachulish Slate Quarry within a new building commissioned by the Highlands and Islands Development Board.

The project combines for the first time for Highland Region an information centre and an interpretive exhibition under one roof.

The interpretive work will be as follows:-

EXHIBITION

Because of the combined nature of the building there are three main sections to the exhibition.

(1) Tourism Orientation

This will tie in closely to the Foyer and Information Area and will contain diagrammatic maps of the Lochaber area, possibly linked up to random access projectors to provide a range of views and other tourism subjects.

(2) Historical/Geological Topics

This section will be concerned with the sort of legend like the massacre of Glencoe, Bonnie Prince Charlie etc, possibly with lifesize tableaux. Geological features such as Rannoch Moor, Glencoe and the Great Glen will also be interpreted along with the development of roads and other industries.

(3) Ballachulish Slate Quarry

This will be the largest section and will interpret the whole development of the Slate Industry (therefore also of Ballachulish) and the work of the Quarry, which is adjacent to the building. There will be working models; 2 lifesize tableaux, one of which will depict the quarry face with men suspended above laying explosive charges and the other tools and objects.

BALLACHULISH SYMBOL

A symbol will be designed to identify

the Visitor Centre. It is the aim of the Region to create more interest in the whole town with this Centre and thus promote tourism. It is probable, therefore, that the symbol could represent the whole town and have several versions for other items such as the new Holiday Village, Craft Centre and Marina, and possibly even be used for local shop signing, etc.

SITE SIGNING

Various signs are to be designed to direct people and cars to the building; on the building itself; at the quarry entrance and at various view points around the quarry.

PUBLICITY, PUBLICATIONS AND SOUVENIRS

There will be posters, colour leaflets (complete with illustrated map), postcards, etc and future souvenir publications on some of the exhibition subjects.

A/V FACILITIES

A small room will be converted for A/V use, probably using video beam projectors to show future programmes on tourist attractions, the Story of Slate and other Highland topics.

Wiltshire Folk Life Society

Penelope Carew Hunt, Chairman,
Records Committee W.F.L.S.

Apart from the regular and constant flow of visitors to see our exhibits in the bays of the sarsen stone and weatherboard barn (the Great Barn, Avebury, Wilts) with its great wealth of timbers supporting a vast area of thatch we are also active on the Records front.

It is our aim to build up a collection of records at our centre to provide the serious student of Folk Life of Wiltshire with written, oral, pictorial and three dimensional material for study. Our main projects on hand (with a long way to go as yet) are - A County wide questionnaire to form a Local History Survey. Answers grouped under 11 sections-Topography, literature, manors, estates, popul-

ation, traditions and customs, idiom, dialect and local sayings, industry, services and leisure, local government, means of communication and an amorphous section headed 'Eyegones' have started to bring in very valuable information about villages in the past and currently. We are finding also that local history societies are being very active and have in some cases (small towns) produced their own local histories. After reading through the replies we have had so far, it is obvious that at least a second round of information on special features, either common to all or peculiar to one place will be of great value.

To tackle the whole questionnaire is indeed a formidable task, but there are certainly some individuals, who welcome the challenge and local history societies can interest their recruits in certain sections.

Another project we are pressing forward is Wiltshire Dialects. We hope that both dialect speakers and those versed in aspects of language construction will be able to work together in various parts of the county to record the subtleties of voice and sounds and follow up words etc. etc. Because of its topography we shall surely find features such as the Salisbury Plain divide the county linguistically, let alone the enclosed effect of the

Royal Salt Works

Claire Baylis

If you are travelling through Eastern France this year, you may like to visit the old Royal Salt Works at ARC-et-SENANS, 36km south-west of Besancon. Here past and future merge in an interesting combination, and interpretation of both is attempted.

Claude Nicolas Ledoux, who built the Royal Salt Works in 1776 was an architect of extraordinary vision, with a strong interest in the future. Looking at some of his drawings on the excellent library at ARC, one is surprised to see how many of his ideas are commonplace today. By a decree of Louis XV, Ledoux designed the Royal Salt Works, situated near the vast forest of Chauv. Salty water

Chalk Stream Valleys.

Publications - There is a growing demand for publications based on research. The Society's most recent to appear is the work of two members - Jean Morrison and Celia Cologne, the former a Wiltshire historian the latter a musician. Their combined effort has produced the first collection of authentic Wiltshire Folk Songs which is available as a paperback (spirally bound) @ £3; by post £3.50.

The next one to come off the stocks soon will be "Down Hearth to Bar Grate". This is a vastly interesting display (because it has over 80 photographs) of the development of the fireplace under the influence of the change from burning logs to coal. Several rare pieces of equipment, almost all from Hugh Roberts own collection, are included. At present we have not got a figure for the price of this work which amplifies and extends Seymour Lindsay's classic 'Iron and Brass implement of the English House' but it will be a paperback to hold the price at an attractive level. It would be best for readers to get in touch with me for orders or enquiries.

Penelope Carew Hunt
Chairman, Records Committee, WFLS
Cowleaze, Edington
Westbury, Wilts

from the springs of the Jura was piped several miles to the works, where it was heated in large tanks over wood fires, causing evaporation. Ledoux prepared an immensely ambitious plan for an ideal town surrounding the salt works, which would provide not only model dwellings for the workers, but also an astonishing serge of buildings dedicated to education and pleasure.

Only part of the town was completed, but the works continued to produce salt until 1890. The buildings gradually fell into disrepair. In 1927, when the owner proposed demolishing the buildings to sell off the stones, the Ministry of Fine Arts intervened, and declared the site a protected monument. Restoration work was lovingly carried out, and today the Salt Works is a peaceful, beautiful place. Ledoux's buildings

now house an encounter centre, mainly concerned with futurology.

This science of the future research centre seeks to stimulate international exchanges around the twin themes of futurology and innovation, through meetings and symposia organised in conjunction with Futuribles, an international association, cultural activities organised by the Ledoux Foundation include exhibitions, festivals and school workshops.

One building is devoted to interpretive displays of varying standards of excellence. The ideas of Ledoux, both in planning the works, and excellence. The ideas of Ledoux, both in planning the works, and other architectural projects, is explained by some twenty large panels, showing extracts from his own works, and those of his contemporaries. Another large hall is given over to the history of salt production, with many original artifacts, including some 18th century wooden pipes which brought the salty water to ARC-et-SENANS. A large pile of rough salt fascinated visiting

Carnegie Grants

Grants made by the Carnegie UK Trust in the Heritage category during the first six months of 1981 included:

Scottish Natural History Library, Renfrewshire - grant of £25,100 towards the cost of essential equipment to help establish this important and unique library.

Edinburgh Natural History Society - grant towards the publication of "Edinburgh's Countryside", an interpretive study of country habitats within the city boundary.

Foxas Bireann, Dublin - grant of £2,000 towards the costs of a seminar on Heritage Interpretation in the Republic of Ireland with participants from all the main statutory and voluntary bodies. Report of the proceedings available from the Trust Office.

Society for the Interpretation of Britain's Heritage - further grant of £2,000 to assist mainly with seminars and conferences to develop the study of Environmental Interpretation by leading practitioners.

children, and displays illustrating salt production elsewhere in the world made useful points of comparison.

To complete one's knowledge of salt production in this area, a visit to Salins-les-Bains is recommended. Here, there are no interpretive facilities, but one can visit the old mines, and taste warm salty water - or indeed swim in the splendid indoor pool fed from the salt springs!

The Salt Works at ARC-et-SENANS are open to the public every day throughout the year. Conferences and seminars are held, using the guest bedrooms and meeting rooms in the former model housing. The huge auditorium, where once stood the evaporation tanks, can seat 2,000, and there is a full range of audio-visual equipment.

(A full description of the restoration of the buildings can be found in *Architectural Review*, May 1972. I would be glad to hear of any interpretive project in this country which deals with the subject of Salt.)

Derwent Valley Trust, Derbyshire - grant of £22,500 over two years towards the post of a Project Officer to stimulate and co-ordinate the environmental interpretation work in the Derwent Valley area.

Medway Heritage Centre Trust, Chatham - grant of £15,000 towards the costs of displays, audio-visual equipment and a vantage point for the new heritage centre

Kennet and Avon Canal Trust - grant of £7,000 towards the costs of the interpretation of the canal and its environs.

Beginner's Way - Exeter Forest - grant of £5,000 to create an interpretive walk through Exeter Forest which would highlight the natural sensations of the Woodland for visitors.

Civic Trusts

Within the national programme and allocation of £100,000 a grant of:

£2,000 to the Weston-super-Mare Society - for an interpretive study.

£355 to Machynlleth Society in Wales for a town trail and way-marking;

£500 to East Bergholt Society, Suffolk for a village trail.

Regional Meetings

REGIONAL EVENTS

Members will have received the programme for regional events for 1981 and will hopefully be attending at least one. Much effort by several people has gone into meeting a widely voiced request to provide regional meetings that members can attend cheaply. It is now up to you to support the events.

Three meetings have already been held, each well attended and successful in providing an interesting and informative day as well as a chance to meet with other members in the region and introduce non-members to the activities of the Society. Unfortunately two other interesting and carefully planned meetings had to be cancelled for lack of support - both in areas where organisers could reasonably have expected a good turn out. What went wrong?

Work has already started on the 1982 programme and ideas for meetings and offers to host them should be sent in as soon as possible. You know what is required, a cheap meeting looking at someone's recent work with a chance to discuss it. An important element is the need for people in a region to get together and discuss their work and the meetings can be less formal than the national ones.

Terry Robinson

YORKSHIRE REGIONAL MEETING

Cathy MacFie

A select group of 11 met at the Bradford Industrial Museum on Saturday, 10 October for a one-day meeting to compare the interpretive techniques used by two major industrial museums at Moorside Mills, Bradford and Armley Mills, Leeds.

Ray McHugh, Deputy Keeper of the Bradford Industrial Museum, prepared the way with an introductory talk about the development of the Museum, which was purchased in 1970 by

Bradford City Council and opened in 1974.

Displays are housed on two main levels, one of which is devoted to worsted textiles. (Moorside Mills originated as a typical worsted spinning mill complex from 1875.) There are plans to extend the textile displays to include non-worsted. Other major display galleries feature Motive Power and Transport. It seemed to some of us that the latter, with the exception of locally manufactured Jowett Cars, was not particularly relevant to Bradford's industrial heritage. Perhaps it reflected the lack of storage space for generous, if inappropriate, donations?

It soon became apparent that the present, acute shortage of funds is straggling the Museum's progress in a number of directions and that interpretation (including the virtual absence of publicity and educational material) is one of the casualties. This introduced a discussion on the merits, or otherwise, of museum entrance fees. Despite the fact that many visitors are not Bradford rate-payers, Ray McHugh felt that a charge system was not economically worthwhile.

Two particularly positive contributions of working machinery and the Museum's Activities Room. Demonstrations of textile and motive power machinery take place half-hourly by museum attendants. Their ability to explain in layman's language the processes involved and to humanise the machinery with (often personal) anecdotes of mill life is essential to hold the interest of the non-technically minded visitor.

The Activities Room is intended primarily for school use, although the Museum Education Service runs a popular holiday programme geared to the family. Here, children (and occasionally adults) can experiment and learn for themselves the basic principles of spinning and weaving; an experience sadly lacking from the public galleries of both museums visited. Surely the opportunity for limited participation - hand-carding; hand-spinning and the chance to feel and test different weaves and qualities of cloth - would not only enhance the general interest of a visit but also convey more

effectively than written text, the principles involved in the spinning process.

A convivial pub lunch was a good reminder that the social content of these meetings is every bit as important as their interpretive value.

Amazingly, we were only a few minutes late for the start of the afternoon session at the Leeds Industrial Museum. Peter Brears (Director, Museum of Leeds) and Peter Kelly (Curator, Leeds Industrial Museum) gave up their entire afternoon to show us the massive complex (which is closed to the public until early summer '82) and explain their interpretive philosophy.

The Museum of Leeds is a new concept which incorporates a number of major museums (including the L.I.M.) and historic sites, linked by a footpath trail along the line of the Leeds-Liverpool Canal. By following the trail, which extends some 6 miles up the Aire Valley from the city centre, and visiting some of the attractions en route, a visitor can begin to understand the essence of Leeds' Heritage.

The site of the Leeds Industrial Museum was purchased over 10 years ago and its long gestation period has enabled planners to give time and care to its preparation. The Museum's collections will represent all the most important aspects of Leeds manufacturing industry from the early 19th century. Like Bradford, the Leeds Industrial Museum is more concerned with processes than objects, although it has done far more to present those processes in their social and historic context. Unlike the Bradford Industrial Museum, however, Leeds makes an entrance charge of 45p and has already produced an impressive range of publicity and educational material for sale.

Armley Mills was once the World's largest woollen mill and its importance to the Leeds textile industry is acknowledged by the large, completed textile display which covers the various processes of woollen manufacture as they were practised at the end of the 19th century, when the industry was at its peak. (There is some co-ordination with the Bradford Industrial Museum to avoid duplication of displays.)

The imaginative flair of Norman Whitfield, Museum Designer, is apparent in the dual use of woollen bales as natural barriers/back-lit display panels; even some of the storage bins have essential text built into their lids. Wherever possible, natural barriers have been used so that visitors can get quite close to the machinery. The idea of working machinery, however, has been abandoned for safety reasons. For mill atmosphere, visitors must rely on sound effects of working machinery; on the visual impact of huge sepia prints depicting working conditions and on an audio-visual presentation (set into a woollen chute).

Other aspects of Leeds industry which are represented in the Museum include clothing; leather; the Cinema (housed in an effectively reconstructed picture hall of 1912); printing; motive power; machine tools; models; cranes; locomotives and a portrait gallery of the great men of Leeds industry. The scale and complexity of the museum is quite mind-boggling but if the eventual development of these sections lives up to the interpretive promise of the completed textile gallery, it will be a museum worth repeated visits.

OPERATION WOODPECKER

Gill Binks, CEI

It was a pity that only 4 people turned up for the S.I.B.H. regional meeting held at Irchester Country Park in August, because it was a glorious day, and an excellent opportunity to see at firsthand how Northamptonshire Leisure Services Countryside staff and volunteers run Operation Woodpecker - a very successful 10 day programme of activities for local children to discover the countryside in and around the Country Park. Alan Teulon, Countryside Officer, and members of his ranger staff together with some of the volunteers were on hand to introduce the project and to discuss their experience of running the scheme over the past few years. We were then able to observe and take part in the day's activities - on that day nearly 200 children were absorbed in "digging up the past", making a nature trail, watching butterflies, acting out legends associated with the

Iron Stone workings and watching an impressive demonstration of birds being cared for by the locally based Raptor Centre. The Countryside Commission gives some grant aid towards the cost of an organiser for the

period of the scheme, and for materials but the scheme relies heavily on volunteers to provide the wide range of activities and also involves contributions from services such as the police, firemen etc.



Operation
Woodpecker

photo:
Gill Binks

PLANNING A REGIONAL MEETING Cathy McFie

Since the idea of SIBH regional events is relatively new, members who are contemplating some activity in their area might find the following summary of what we did for the Yorkshire Regional Meeting helpful.

Idea: Autumn meeting
Industrial Museums

July: Visit Leeds and Bradford Industrial Museum to discuss possibility of an SIBH venue.

Discuss ideas and date with Terry Robinson (Events Sec.)

August: Confirm date and proposed arrangements with Museums

Book pub lunch

*Finalise costings

Circulate information to SIBH members (in own region and geographically close centres) and others who are likely to be interested

(Remember to include closing date for applications on booking form.)

*£5.50 per head covered all Museum admissions; refreshments; pub lunch; guide books and administrative costs. It did not include additional publicity (e.g. press release and information to non-members) or organiser's personal expenses.

September: Prepare and circulate press release to local newspapers and radio (main object to attract new members).

Inform local tourist information officers of event (for extra publicity) and request appropriate information packs to distribute at the meeting

Confirm bookings; send receipts, Museum guide books and additional details on venue etc.

One week before: Phone Museums, pub and anyone else concerned to make sure that arrangements are in hand and under control.

Collect tourist information packs

Make lapel badges

Some interesting facts: 3 of the 11 participants came from outside Yorkshire

3 of the 11 participants were non-members (but not for long, we hope!)

The press release produced articles in at least two local papers and an interview on BBC Radio Leeds. Keighley Junior Chamber has since asked for details of SIBH to circulate to its members.

Guidelines for those undertaking regional events or contemplating doing so are available from the SIBH Events Secretary Terry Robinson at the Countryside Commission.

News and Notes

HERITAGE SWAP-SHOP

Museums, local societies and voluntary groups concerned with telling the Pennine story (together with national and regional organisations) will be getting together on 20th February at the Birchcliffe Centre in Hebden Bridge to share ideas and discuss joint activities.

Topics for discussion will include sources of funding and other assistance, joint publishing and marketing, and there will be an opportunity for those present to tell about recent developments and plans.

If you would like to attend, or find out more about the meeting, please drop a line to Bill Breakell, Pennine Heritage Network, The Birchcliffe Centre, Hebden Bridge, West Yorkshire HX7 8DG.

PEAK NATIONAL PARK STUDY CENTRE Losehill Hall

Conserving Historic Landscapes
February 4th-5th, 1982

A 2-day seminar to discuss the practical management measures needed to conserve historic rural landscapes.

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

Development and Organisation of
Volunteer Programmes

8th-12th March, 1982

A Countryside Commission sponsored training course to give practical advice to countryside staff who work with volunteers.

Countryside Interpretation

22nd-31st January, 1981

A Countryside Commission sponsored course to provide basic training and practise in the principles and techniques of interpretation in the Countryside.

PENNINE HERITAGE NETWORK DEVELOPS

Since the Spring, when Bill Breakell introduced the Network to "Interpretation", some of the Network's short-term objectives have been realised, in particular establishing links with local authorities and societies.

Working closely with Bill and Maria Murtagh, the Huddersfield Canal Society published in August, with financial assistance from West Yorkshire Metropolitan County Council, an 80 page, fully illustrated, booklet "The Huddersfield Canals Towpath Guide".

When contact was made last year, the society members had surveyed the canals (and pubs), and accompanying articles, illustrations and photographs were nearly complete. Consultations between Bill and the editor in the new year were continued by Maria who, in May, briefed three Bradford College art students, to produce cover illustrations, layout design and map work. In June and July the artwork was prepared and the finished booklet collected from the printers in mid-August. The project proved to be of immense value to the students, who had never before worked on a publication that actually went to print. Needless to say, all parties benefited from the experience!

The production of their own range of publications, to be launched next Spring, is well in hand. At the same time, the Network is liaising with another local society, with plans for interpretive display panels to be on site in 1982.

WESTON STUDY

Philip Beisly's note on the start of the Weston super Mare Interpretation Study in the summer issue of Interpretation attracted the attention of a number of readers. Philip has now produced a draft interpretation plan. It proposes a major new Visitor Centre, seven locations for new on-site information, a publications programme of trails, kits and papers and additions to the existing guided tours programme. Philip's fifth progress report notes that it is hoped to produce a final version of the plan shortly and launch it formally during November, with the start of implementation scheduled for

Spring 1982. A future issue of Interpretation will report more fully on this pioneering plan for a seaside resort.

V.S.O. POSTS

The following posts were advertised by Voluntary Service Overseas in Habitat, formerly the newsletter of the Council for Nature and now published by CoEnCo;

Nature Conservation Teacher, Malawi
Wildlife Officer, Sarawak
Park Interpretation Officer,
Bako National Park

These posts may now be filled, but anyone interested in them - or similar two year voluntary postings should contact VSO, 9 Belgrave Square, London SW1. Tel 01 235 5191 for more information.

MARKETING VISITOR CENTRES

The Countryside Commission is employing the Research Bureau Limited, a Unilever company to conduct a marketing study of visitor centres. The study is nearing completion and has used questionnaires and management records to establish what the public are attracted by, how well they are satisfied and how managers of centres can more effectively adjust their management and the centre's orientation and projection so that the fullest use is made of it and its benefits maximised. Brockhole and Tintern station have been the primary subjects for scrutiny, with secondary study sites at Wellington Country Park, Sutton Bank, Buxton Country Park, Queen Elizabeth Country Park and Risley Moss. A report is to be published in 1982.

MERTHYR POST

The Merthyr Tydfil Heritage Trust have received an Urban Aid grant for eighteen months to enable them to appoint a Director. They will be looking for someone with an interest in the heritage of the area (particularly its industrial and social history) and with an ability to organise the affairs of the Trust and, in particular, its major proposed project for the restoration of Dowlais Stables.

Further details are available from David Francis, Secretary, Merthyr

Tydfil Heritage Trust, Central Library, Merthyr Tydfil, Mid Glamorgan.

EFFECTIVE EXHIBITIONS

Geoff Stansfield has recently completed a study for the Countryside Commission on effective exhibitions. The report is due to be published in time for the Society's meeting in London in December. It results from a review of the existing literature on visitor behaviour and exhibitions, readability of print, input of various techniques, exhibit types etc. The report also has a substantial review of monitoring techniques and evaluation. Where it can, it draws conclusions from past experimental work and experience and an advisory booklet is to be prepared that will apply concerted findings as guidance to those setting up new exhibitions and evaluating or redesigning existing ones.

AIM EVENTS PROGRAMME

The Association of Independent Museums have arranged an interesting programme of seminars over the next twelve months:

13 November 1981 - Museums and Tourism (in association with the Council for Museums and Galleries in Scotland)
venue : Edinburgh
Fee : £10.00

March 1982 - Job Creation Schemes (in association with Museums Association)
venue : Beamish

June 1982 - Museums and New Technology
venue : London

September 1981 - Fund Raising for Small Museums
venue : Norton Priory

Autumn 1982 - Museum Catering
venue : to be decided

Details are available on request from Diana Zeuner, Ganville Cottage, Singleton, Chichester, West Sussex.

POW COMMITTEE NEWS

The Prince of Wales' Committee are about to publish the complete series of seven leaflets "About the Montgomery Canal ..." There are free ones on Welshpool, Angling and Boating and four towpath leaflets at 20 pence

each. These seven leaflets were prepared by a Powys County Council sponsored team funded by the Manpower Services Commission and working closely with POW Interpretive Projects officer Andrew Guest. The leaflets are available from The Prince of Wales' Committee, 2 Canal Yard, Welshpool, Powys. Send large SAE (10"x 6") or cost of postage.

The POW Committee is also seeking funds from the Manpower Services Commission to set up an experimental Community Design Service in South Wales. The Committee will be looking for a small team of professionally qualified or skilled people to help voluntary groups in the design and implementation of practical projects starting early in 1982. The team will be comprised of people who will have been unemployed for at least six months with a background in architecture, landscape design, graphic design or planning. Further details from POW Committee, Sophia Gardens Lodge, Cardiff CF1 9LJ.

DISABLED PEOPLE IN THE COUNTRYSIDE

A new and unique handbook from the Countryside Commission is designed to help disabled people enjoy more freedom in the countryside. *Informal Countryside Recreation for Disabled People* deals in a very practical way with the problems faced by disabled people who want a day out in the country. The text outlines the problems and describes solutions. Large-scale drawings illustrate various schemes, techniques and practical needs. The books is free - part of the Commission's advisory series - and is aimed at recreation managers, to help them provide the same access to the countryside for disabled people, that others enjoy.

Disabled people get as much, if not more, enjoyment from the countryside as do able-bodied people. It is not only wheelchair users but the ambulant, blind, deaf and mentally handicapped whose needs are dealt with in the book. The text explains:

"... all too often, the countryside experienced by disabled people is marred ... by an environment which has been modified by the able-bodied for able-bodied people.

"And very often, not only are disabled people excluded but also the elderly, the young and perhaps the pregnant."

The Commission do not suggest that all recreation facilities in the countryside should be designed for use by disabled people. But they do suggest greater provision for the disabled and more publicity for facilities which do exist. "Integration rather than segregation should be aimed for, to foster the acceptance of handicapped people as an inseparable part of society," the book states. Restrictions caused by different disabilities are explained. Design of equipment and facilities, provision of information, recreation facilities and transport are dealt with in separate sections. There is a useful check-list of needs, a comprehensive bibliography and address list as well as a list of plants which can be used to give a variety of shape, smell, colour and size to any scheme.

Copies are available from the Countryside Commission, Crescent Place, Cheltenham, Glos, GL50 3RA

STONEHENGE

It was reported during September that the Department of the Environment has decided to ignore and suppress the findings of a committee it set up in 1977 to study the management and future of Stonehenge. The working party found in favour of better visitor facilities, more staff (guides and security personnel) and a better bookshop and information centre. The grounds for the DOE decision are said to be financial, though one of the country's leading tourist attractions must surely be a money spinner if handled properly. There is still a glimmer of hope for those who want to see this marvellous monument better interpreted: a DOE spokesman was quoted as saying that the Department does see merit in the working party's proposals. At present there is no money for implementing them, but this does not amount to a permanent 'no'.

STYAL ALLOTMENT

The Quarry Bank Mill Trust has started a project to recreate an allotment garden of up to 150 years ago. Only

vegetable varieties introduced before 1900 are being grown, the seed for which is being provided by the Henry Doubleday Research Association. The idea is to replicate the kind of vegetable gardening which was an integral part of the domestic economy at the time the factory colony became well established.

SCOTTISH MUSEUMS GUIDE

A comprehensive *Guide to Scottish Museums and Galleries* has just been published. It is the first ever guide to include details of the 300 plus museums and galleries in Scotland. It lists their facilities and services to the public, their main collections and permanent exhibitions, locations, admission times and charges. It has been jointly produced by the Council for Museums and Galleries in Scotland and the Scottish Tourist Board. Price £1.50 from booksellers, museums and tourist information centres throughout Scotland. Further details from CMGS, County House, 20-22 Torpichen Street, Edinburgh EH3 8JB

COUNTRYSIDE RECREATION MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION EVENTS

Who needs training?

A series of 4 workshops designed to investigate the views, opinions and experience of employers, educators, trainees and employees involved with countryside recreation management.

- 5 March Merrist Wood Agricultural College Surrey
- 10 March Dunfermline College of Physical Education Edinburgh
- 18 March Bangor Normal College North Wales
- March Crewe and Alsager College of Education

Cost £5.50 per person per day
(CRMA & SIBH members £4.50)

A Workshop on Access Agreements
- arranged jointly by the Countryside Recreation Management Association and The Council for the Protection of Rural England (Lancashire Branch)
Friday 26th February 1982
To be held in the Ashcroft Hall at Samlesbury Hall Nr. Preston Lancashire

This joint workshop will examine an issue which is of crucial importance to any recreational activity within the countryside. The current controversy over access on the Ridgeway serves as a good example of the degree of feeling on this issue.

It is intended to develop the theme along the lines of - procedures, effectiveness, success, funding, legislation, problems, reaction.

While it is intended to introduce the issue, much of the success of this workshop will come from the interchange of views between those concerned. We hope to have a good cross-section of relevant interests and to make use of small discussion groups.

The fee is £3.00 per person (£2.00 to members of C.R.M.A. and C.P.R.E.) (any branch)

Write to David Alexander, CPRE, Samlesbury Hall, Preston New Road, Near Preston, Lancs PR5 0UP

Why Pick on the Countryside?

5th to 7th January 1982
at the Halls of Residence
University of Salford

A Workshop Seminar for all those managing resources or organising visits in countryside areas for youth or school groups.

A Countryside Recreation Management Association event organised with Snowdonia National Park.

Approximate cost £45.00

Further Details from:
CRMA
Dept. of Biology
Gardner St Annexe
University of Salford
Salford
M5 4WT

VERNACULAR BUILDINGS

The rich heritage of our vernacular architecture comes alive in Traditional Buildings of Britain. (RIBA/Gollanz £8.95)

Dr R.W. Brunskill discusses a wide variety of regionally characteristic buildings - houses and cottages, farms and barns, windmills, chapels and early industrial works - where they are

found and when and why they were placed there.

He reflects upon the historical and regional factors that led to the popularity and decline in construction of various types of house, from the H-shaped Hall and multi-storey to the double-pile large houses; from the Wealden, cross-passage, baffle-entry and two-unit to the double-pile small houses and single-fronted cottages. Dr Brunskill discusses types of aisled

barns and the reasons for the growth of granary/cartsheds and the forms they took; he shows how religious ceremonial dictated the design of chapels; and he compares the style and effectiveness of different types of windmill and watermill. In the same way Dr Brunskill comments on the general styles and structure of building types, he compares the variety of materials, design and ornamentation used in and on roofs, walls and mouldings, windows and window-frames.

MUSEUM OF CIDER

Fifteen thousand bottles arriving at the Museum of Cider, Hereford. The bottles are a gift from Rockware Glass Limited, who specially modified moulds to produce a bottle very similar to the old style champagne quart, no longer manufactured in Britain. Museum staff and YOP workers will fill, cork and wire all 15,000 and lay them down in their cellars to illustrate the way large quantities of cider were

stacked to ferment in the bottle to produce a natural sparkle. "Even this many is a tiny proportion of the 3 million bottles that were once kept in the cellars by Bulmers" says Michael Quinion, Curator of the Museum of Cider "but enough to give the idea". The Museum is developing a major display on the history of the glass bottle and of sparkling cider since 1800.



interpretation newsletter

THE HILLS ARE ALIVE

As part of a carefully planned publications structure (to be discussed in a future 'Interpretation'), Pennine Heritage Network are releasing a basic geological map for the South Pennines on 1st December.

'How the South Pennines were made' looks at the long, slow process by which the Pennine landscape has evolved over the last 350 million years. A full colour simplified geological map and cross-section of the South Pennines introduce the main rock types and show the influence and effects of the ice age.

On the reverse, a large wallchart (33" x 23") illustrates the building of this landscape; the ice age; early man and the resulting peat deposits;

millstone grit; and early industrial sites.

The publication tells of the foundations on which the world's first industrial revolution took root some two hundred years ago.

Publication Date: 1st December 1981

Price: £1.25

Format: A1 sheet folded to A5 (210x 150mm); (also available flat); full colour map and cross-section; 16 drawings; 6 photographs; 6 diagrams.

Pennine Heritage
The Birchcliffe Centre
Hebden Bridge
West Yorks
HX7 8DG Tel: 042 284 4450

1982 MEETINGS AND BEYOND

The 1982 Annual Conference and AGM is due to take place at Stratford upon Avon 16-18 April. It is proposed to run the meeting with speakers and participants from the Tourism Society as the theme is to be 'Interpretation and Tourism'. We shall be looking at the various slants visitors are given in the interpretation of Stratford, if indeed they are told anything at all, and it is planned to break the conference into groups on the Saturday to carry out some comparative studies. We also expect to hear papers from various viewpoints on what tourism does for Stratford. There are plans for a theatre visit, if this can be arranged.

The autumn meeting we are planning as a follow-on from Stratford, holding it in the Lake District and looking at Marketing and Interpretation. This will be a joint meeting with the Association of Independent Museums. The hosts will be the Lake District

National Park Centre at Brockhole and the meeting will be organised so that members can attend for a Saturday only if they wish, or can include supplementary work on Friday and Sunday to the core of the business on the Saturday. The dates are 29-31 October.

In 1983, the Mary Rose should be on show in Portsmouth. There is also an interpretive plan entitled 'Defence of the Realm' related to Portsmouth and the coastal defences and this awaits implementation. Some cries of, 'Why are we waiting?' by the Society might be called for if nothing has happened by then. There will also be some new developments in museums in the area. We are therefore already working on plans to hold the 1983 annual meeting in Portsmouth. The meeting might also be an opportunity to assess the success of Maritime England Year, 1982.

Terry Robinson