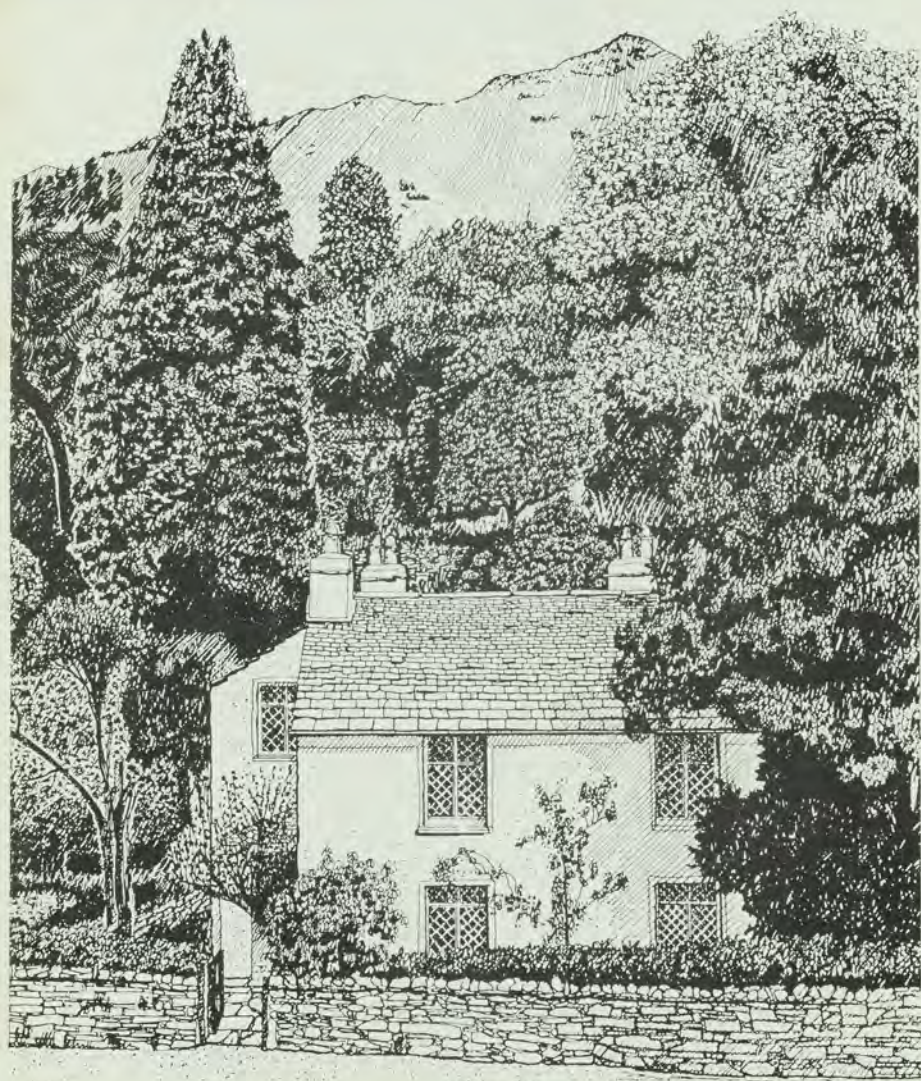


interpretation

NUMBER 23

SPRING 1983



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 £7 per annum for individuals and £20 for corporate bodies.

The Newsletter

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Viewpoint One: By Courtesy of ...

A more business-like and market-oriented approach to interpretive planning and management is being forced upon providers of environmental interpretation. Economic constraint is a major reason for this, manifested in government cutbacks and the increasing scarcity of other grants, donations and covenants.

A vastly under-utilised resource for meeting capital and operating costs is business sponsorship. A source of funding which is becoming well established, particularly in sport, the arts and trade exhibitions, business sponsorship is potentially a rich source of new opportunities for public and voluntary bodies and private individuals involved in the implementation and development of interpretive facilities.

Sponsorship is now more prevalent than philanthropy, companies seemingly needing to justify the outlay in terms of marketing benefits which will accrue to them as a result of the arrangement. Benefits commonly sought include increased publicity and sales of a product or brand to a specific target audience; greater public awareness of the company; corporate image building; improved relations with customers, the community, staff and the government; and being seen to be improving the quality of life.

There are potential dangers for interpreting agencies in such relationships. Firstly, they will be rendering a marketing service for the sponsor and must be professional and possess the staff to service the sponsorship throughout its duration. The lack of adequate manpower, or the money to employ sponsorship consultants, may be offset by negotiating a deal which includes utilisation of the sponsor's expertise, such as printing, design, publicity or planning advice.

Secondly, the company, its scale and products must be appropriate to the interpretive activity and its users. The providers' image may be affected by the relationship, though this may work either way, and they may be influenced in their behaviour by fear of losing a sponsorship. Sponsorships can indeed be insecure, though acquiring the first sponsor will make finding subsequent ones that much easier.

When approaching potential sponsors, great care and professionalism are needed in the face of intense competition for their favour. A proposal must be submitted directly to the person responsible for the decision in good time to be budgetted for. It must detail how the money is to be spent and what can be offered in return, as well as other information about the facilities, users and the providing agency, particularly its financial situation.

The types of benefit offered to sponsors might include the use of the company's name in the title of the facility; discreet displays or advertising in visitor
cont. next page

centres and recognition on all leaflets; company logo on nature trail marker posts, if compatible; distribution of company leaflets to visitors; and the use of any auditorium, lecturing or catering facilities for meetings, entertaining, etc. The amount of exposure given to the sponsor must be appropriate to the proportion of the total costs that this funding represents.

The value of well planned and maintained interpretation is increasingly apparent. It is time to carefully consider the potential role of business sponsorship in maintaining and developing levels and standards of provision.

Duncan Smith

Viewpoint Two: Part of the Strategy

Whether or not the main purpose of environmental interpretation is to underpin the conservation cause, it is certain that effective interpretation can make a significant contribution to public understanding of conservation issues. It is heartening to find this truth enshrined in the conclusions of one of the national Review Groups that during 1982 grappled earnestly with the great issues identified in the World Conservation Strategy.

For anyone whose attention was not exactly rivetted by the WCS launch (simultaneously in 34 countries in March 1980), a reminder of its intentions may be useful. It aims *inter alia* "to help advance the achievement of sustainable development through the conservation of living resources", "explains the contribution of ... conservation to human survival and sustainable development", and "identifies the priority conservation issues and main requirements for dealing with them".

Here is not the place to rehearse arguments about the appropriateness of Grand Designs in solving our global environmental problems, except perhaps to observe that it is folly to imagine such approaches to be relevant to opinion formation only in under-educated developing countries. The fact is that the original forty page international publication, has now been followed in Britain by some six hundred pages more, distilling the views of over a hundred UK experts invited to examine aspects of the application of WCS in this country.

We should not make the mistake of exaggerating the impact of all these reports in our day to day work as environmentalists. But where something clear and unequivocal about interpretation emerges from the fog of words all those committees generated, we should grasp it and use it to promote support for our activities.

Do not be deflected from reading all the documents (which are available from the Nature Conservancy Council) especially as 1983 is intended to see a thorough going practitioner debate, but selective readers should note especially report number two entitled Education for Commitment, and in particular recommendation eight. This "aims to assist the dissemination of information about the environment, environmental issues, the objectives of conservation and development and personal involvement to the general public". Six proposals for action follow, one of which reads "Environmental interpretation services (which may range for example from visitor centres to display boards and publication programmes) should be provided at all sites which attract people to explore or enjoy any aspect of the environment. Such informal public education provision should also be developed as an indispensable part of major programmes of environmental change, particularly those instigated by public environmental planning bodies".

Not only does such a paragraph offer general endorsement for interpretive work, but links it closely to environmental planning interests. Such key allies will serve interpretation well if their involvement is encouraged.

A Conservation and Development Programme for the UK (as the reports are titled) does not of course enjoy the status of government policy - yet. But no one should doubt that general guidelines such as these will have to be adopted in the corridors of power eventually. They will be all the more influential for incorporation of interpretive aims and objectives.

Anthony Fyson

The Mary Rose Adventure

Richard Harrison, Mary Rose Trust

The successful recovery of the hull of the Mary Rose following the total excavation and recovery of the many thousands of artifacts and the decision by the Mary Rose Trust to develop the Mary Rose Tudor Ship Museum within the historic part of Portsmouth Naval Base presents a formidable and challenging interpretive opportunity.

The original plan to build on a green field site at the eastern end of Portsmouth's seafront had many attractions from the point of view of ensuring a planned interpretive programme within a building designed to facilitate effective and satisfying presentation.

On the other hand the association with the historic Naval Base, one of the finest groups of 18th century buildings and structures in the country, H.M.S. Victory, and Warrior in a few years

time, together with the Royal Naval Museum, and close to where the Mary Rose was built makes much more historical sense. The half million or so visitors to H.M.S. Victory a year provide an excellent base on which to build. Marketing Eastney would have been difficult and expensive.

In developing the plan for Eastney (see Museums Journal Vol.81 pages 11-17) some very important concepts were established. Fulfilling these within historic buildings built to meet very different functions and many of which are scheduled ancient monuments is not going to be easy. Obtaining Building Regulation and Ancient Monument approval for the roof over the dock in which the hull is located has given us an early experience of what we are up against. The proximity of adjoining buildings necessitated relaxation of the regulations and the Base Fire Officers are more concerned with preventing a fire spreading to the nearby dockyard buildings and ships than with saving the Mary Rose! Fortunately our good relations with the City Council and Royal Navy has smoothed our path considerably.

In the four months that have elapsed since the recovery of the Mary Rose a short and medium term strategy has

The Mary Rose in her cradle in dry-dock at Portsmouth (photo: Mary Rose Trust)



been evolved which recognises four factors:

1. The need to respond quickly to the enormous public interest generated by the recovery.

2. To make the greater part of the Trust's activities self-funding as quickly as possible.

3. The need to get an early commitment by the Ministry of Defence to the establishment of the Mary Rose Tudor Ship Museum permanently within the Naval Base and all that implies in terms of buildings, visitor services and impact on Europe's largest Naval Base.

4. The need to formulate an overall policy for the development of, and co-operation between, the existing heritage facilities within the Naval Base and those likely to come in the future. The Trust view is that this requires an umbrella organisation to create, develop and manage such a policy.

There is however potential conflict between these factors. Public expectation is high. The hull, unless adequately explained could be very disappointing. Even the most exciting finds require imaginative display and interpretation. None of this can be achieved overnight even if finance was already available, which it is not. Nor is it likely to be until the Trust has a long term commitment from the Ministry of Defence.

With all these factors in mind the Trust has agreed a two year programme which attempts to reach a sensible compromise.

1. The Hull and Ship Hall.

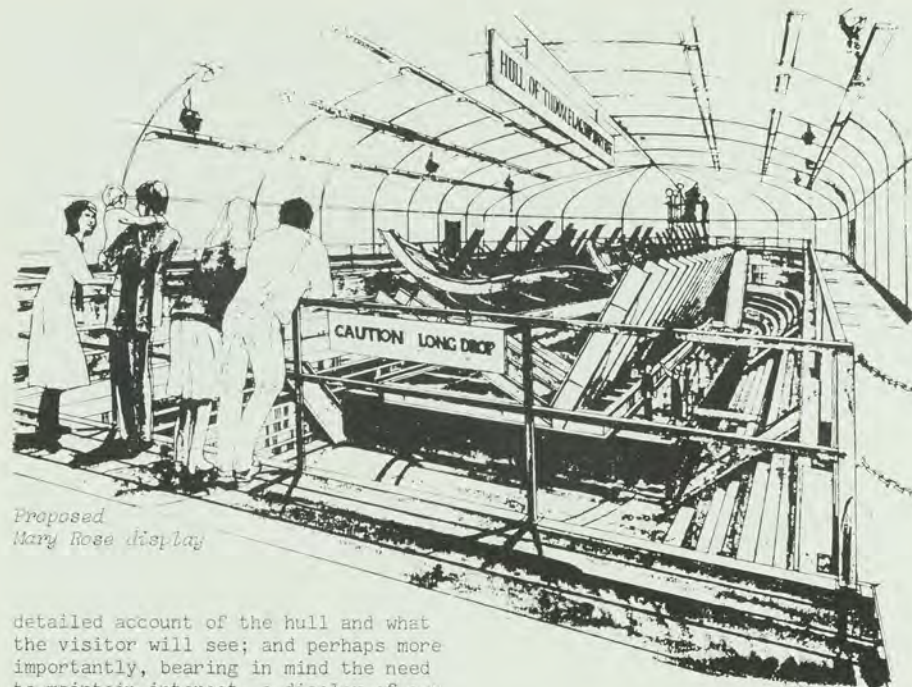
The Conservation programme calls for the hull to be enclosed in an air tight structure to facilitate maintaining the water content of the timber at much the same level as it was when the hull was recovered. This is achieved by a combination of spraying with chilled fresh water - chilled to reduce the microbiological attack, and a fogging system which maintains the total environment at a high humidity level. Within No. 3 Dock adjoining H.M.S. Victory the Hull lies in its steel cradle resting on a 2.5 metre high barge. The dock provides the floor and walls. Bearing in mind

possible uncertainty about the length of time the hull will be in the dock and the need to keep costs as low as possible whilst achieving an envelope within which high humidity can be maintained, the Trust appointed Spandal Orbit Structures as their Building contractor. This Scottish firm have developed a building system based on heat treated aluminium geodetically constructed arched spans with a stretched skin of panama weave trevira possessing tremendous physical strength. This structure on 14 arched spans of 29 metres will be 67 metres long and 19 metres from the floor of the dock in height. The maximum height from ground level will be 8½ metres. In order to achieve a controlled environment within the building it will be clad with a double skin coated with a flame retardant PVC. Between the skin will be 35mm thermal insulated panels, foil coated on both sides to provide a fire barrier and guaranteed not to degrade even in damp conditions.

The hull conservation programme is likely to take up to fifteen years. During the first three years the ship's structure, decks, partitions etc., recovered during excavation will be replaced and a small team of archaeologists, shipwrights and scientists has been appointed to carry out this task. Subsequently the conservation process will begin. The best method is still being evaluated by scientists at the National Maritime Museum but is likely to be similar to the *Wasa* - spraying with a water soluble wax, polyethylene glycol.

The scene certainly over the next two years will be one of constant change in a workshop situation. This the public enjoys, and it is therefore the intention this year, as soon as the building programme is complete, to give them a glimpse of the hull from a bridge across the dock.

In order that such a visit will have some meaning, an outdoor two-dimensional display is being designed by the Trust's consultants, Robin Wade Design Associates. This will be located in the approaches to the dock and will have three basic themes. A brief history of the ship, her discovery, excavation and raising; a more



*Proposed
Mary Rose display*

detailed account of the hull and what the visitor will see; and perhaps more importantly, bearing in mind the need to maintain interest, a display of our plans for 1984 and beyond.

Within the ship hall there will be simple regularly updated explanations of what work is being done that day. It is also intended to have volunteer interpreters available to answer questions and manage the long queues which will certainly develop on busy days.

2. Exhibition Hall

Behind the Trust's decision to develop the Museum in the Naval Base was the likelihood of certain areas and buildings within the base being vacated by the Navy. In addition to the dry dock docks close to H.M.S. Victory, buildings like Brunnel's Block Mills and three of the Boat Houses just inside Victory Gate are listed as becoming available over the next few years. The Department of the Environment plans to restore the Block Mills so this was ruled out. However the Mid-Victorian Boathouses, two wooden and the other brick with magnificent iron columns and girders are ideally suited for museum purposes. Between the two wooden boathouses is a mast pond over which perhaps one day, the hull could

be displayed. This, together with the three boathouses would meet all the needs of the Mary Rose Tudor Ship Museum brief.

Initially the Trust is negotiating a lease of the first to become available, the 1200m² No. 5 Boathouse and adjoining annexe. As early as possible in 1984, and no later than Easter, it is planned to open this as a common entrance and information centre to the Naval Base and first phase exhibition of the Mary Rose story together with A/V Theatre and shop.

Robin Wade's design proposals are still in their formative stage but in order to establish the Mary Rose Adventure as a worthwhile experience justifying a substantial admission charge, and capable of attracting visitors in large numbers who will come back, it is anticipated that this first phase exhibition will cost £½ million and occupy the greater part of the 1200m open space available. (This cost includes alterations to the building itself to make it suitable for public use).

Exhibition themes will include the significance of the Mary Rose in the history of the ship and war at sea, the discovery, excavation and recovery of the hull and life at sea. The latter will provide opportunities to interpret the many exciting and unique artifacts recovered from the hull illustrating many aspects of everyday Tudor life as well as full scale reconstructions of various parts of the ship.

This programme will allow the Trust to respond effectively to public interest and to justify the faith of those who invested so much in the excavation and recovery of the hull.

Basildon Plotlands

Terry Robinson, Countryside Commission

There are some chapters in the social history of Britain which starkly reveal the urgency of the demand felt by many people for a place of their own in the countryside. Squatters in the developing world have tended to congregate around cities like moths round a lamp (often a smoking one) whereas in the developed world the exact opposite has been the case with city-dwellers looking to the open lands: each type yearns for riches - but of a very contrasting sort.

The new town of Basildon, East of Tilbury is based in part on such a system of settlement - known as the plotlands. Farmland sold at the time of the agricultural depression at the end of the last century was divided into small lots. These were bought by Londoners who stage-by-stage converted them from campsites and chalet dwellings into holiday homes and often permanent residences. It was self-determination par excellence, developing a richness of community that leaves its echoes today, and produces stories of individual families' dogged endeavours, often involving an extension of commitment that could only be maintained on the prospect of a better life for the family.

It also allows time for the establishment of the umbrella organisation which is so essential to the future development of the historic Dockyard. The concept of a Portsmouth Naval Maritime Centre based on the historic buildings within the Base, the Mary Rose Tudor Ship Museum, HMS Victory, Warrior, the Royal Naval Museum together with other historic ships in the future, is already commanding considerable support. Imaginatively conceived on a firm commercial basis this could become one of Europe's major Tourist Attractions. The Mary Rose has the opportunity to lead the way. I believe it can.

The Development Corporation have decided to preserve one of the remaining plotlands and to perpetuate this story. Few dwellings now exist on the site but the grass avenues and remains of overgrown gardens give a reminder of the life that once lay there. Plans for the area include the opening of one of the remaining dwellings and displaying it as a home together with the setting up of a brief and simple plotland trail.

One of the most important vehicles for the story is a short illustrated booklet that is to be produced. Drawing clearly on the rich memories of people who were members of families who colonised the area, the booklet is a highly enjoyable and thought-providing read. It is backed up by some delightful family photographs which sharply capture the life and atmosphere of the place. The simple and straightforward approach to interpretation has produced an effective result.

When you're next tired of London, go and have a look at the Basildon plotlands.

Readers may like to note that a definitive study of plotlands in the South-East by Dennis Hardy and Colin Ward will be published by Mansell in the not-too-distant future. Entitled Arcadia for All: the legacy of a makeshift landscape, the book will 'put Plotlands on the map'.

Interpreting the Polders

Terry Stevens
Marpen Country Park



Nieuwland Visitor Centre, Lelystad

THE STRUGGLE AGAINST WATER

Many interpretive programmes tell the story of man's impact upon his environment. Nowhere in Europe is this influence better illustrated than in the reclaimed land of the IJsselmeerpolders of the Netherlands. Land reclamation in the 'low countries' has taken place for over 1000 years. However, it was only after the development of the rotating-turret windmill in the fifteenth century, that it became possible to reclaim land which was permanently underwater. In 1528 the first small lake was pumped dry - a modest start for a movement which has culminated in the reclamation of polder land from the bottom of the Zuyder Zee (1½-4 metres below sea level).

In 1667 Dutch Engineer Hendric Stevin proposed closing off the Zuyder Zee, draining and reclaiming it. It was another 250 years however before the Zuyder Zee Act was passed in 1918. The plan of operations, drawn up by Dr Lely in 1890, was eventually considered following the shortage of food in 1918 after World War 1, and the disastrous flooding of 1916.

Consequently the aims of reclaiming the Zuyder Zee in 1918 were sixfold: to increase safety from flooding; to increase food production and meet demands for farmland; to improve water control and salinity; and, finally, to enhance communication between western and north-eastern parts of the Netherlands. Whilst these aims still

hold today the Dutch have realised that land reclamation in Lake IJssel can solve the spatial problems of the country as a whole. Consequently there is land allocation for urban development, industrial sites, recreation and conservation.

The dam enclosing the IJssel Lake was completed in 1932 following the emergence of the first polder, Wieringermeer in 1930. Over the past forty years 146,000 ha. of reclaimed land has been reclaimed in the North Eastern polder and Flevoland. Contemporary demands for further agricultural land and reducing population growth has now stimulated public debate about the need for a fifth polder - that of Markerwaard (60,000ha). Whether or not this project goes ahead, and whatever ones views on the desirability of land reclamation as an alternative to interpretation of the natural environment, this is an impressive undertaking.

INTERPRETATION OF THE POLDERS

Interpretation of the 'project IJsselmeerpolders' is being undertaken by 'De Rijksdienst voor de IJsselmeerpolders' (R.I.J.P.), the agency solely responsible for the polders development.

The provision of interpretive facilities at present comprises

- (1) the Nieuwland Visitor Centre north of Lelystad (Flevoland)
- (2) the Natuur park also at Lelystad

- (3) the Museum of Shipsarchaeology
- (4) Flevohof
- (5) the museum of Schokland in the Noordoostpolder

Of course as one may expect from the Dutch the planning and relationship between these facilities has been carefully controlled and interpretive potential elsewhere in the polders is now being considered.

The absence of an overall interpretive plan however is surprising for the Dutch are so deliberate and systematic in all other aspects of land use planning, particularly for recreation and especially in the 'new' lands of the polders. However, those facilities which are provided are stimulating and very effective. The 'Nieuwland Visitor Centre' at Lelystad is an example worthy of closer examination.

THE NIEUWLAND CENTRE

The Nieuwland centre functions as a gathering point for visitors to the Ijsselpolders. Its location reflects this role. At Lelystad it is linked to the polder projects administrative and geographical centre. It is also on the main route/dam linking Flevoland to Enkhuzizen in the North. Specialist architects were employed to design a centre incorporating tradit-

ional architecture of the Netherlands. Their successful plan is based upon an agricultural theme with large window space representing windmill sails. The three linked buildings provide space for cafeteria, auditorium and the interpretive exhibition. The interpretation pursues the theme of the buildings relating the history of reclamation and the engineering achievements of dyke building etc.

Displays at the Nieuwland Centre



The exhibits are grouped around particular themes at different floor levels, which all the time allows the visitor to see into the next level thus successfully enticing to the next stage.

The whole is kept completely flexible based upon both the grouping of themes and the use of modules in the media. Exciting effects are achieved by 3D binoculars, computer quiz boards, 20 visitor operated slide tape sequences, listening posts, and the most imaginative use of original artifact that I have ever seen.

The entire exhibition is multilingual (Dutch, English, German, French), even the 6-screen audio visual presentation which offers all visitors a 12 minute introduction to the exhibition.

Throughout the centre the highest quality materials have been used from faced brick to quarry floor tiles -

and the quality is carried into the interpretive experience. The budget reflects this fact; the construction in 1976 cost 2½ million Guilders. It is important to note that an additional 50% of this total was then spent on interpretation (1 million Guilders).

How often does that level of commitment occur in Britain?

The centre opened in 1977 and attracts an average of 100,000 people a year.

The addition further of 15 ha of outdoor demonstration areas, a programme of lectures and traditional musical events will ensure the continued success of this centre. To date no evaluation has taken place; however following the visit this summer by ISOMUL (International Symposium on the Multiple Use of Land) and an exchange of information and evaluation package is being developed.

Interpretation in Resource Management

EVALUATING EFFECTIVENESS

Duncan Smith

The recently published SIBH conference report on evaluation¹ is evidence of a recognition that evaluation is fundamental to the comprehensive planning of all interpretive programmes. Many programme sponsors are constrained in undertaking evaluation by financial, manpower, technical or political considerations, and regrettably many are still inhibited by poor programme planning and a failure to specify programme goals and objectives. However, the report shows that evaluation techniques are becoming available for those with the ability and foresight to attempt to use them.

Progress is being made in evaluating the attention given to media and their communicative and educational effect-

iveness, and this must continue. It is slower in coming in evaluating the achievement of resource and visitor management objectives by interpretive provision at recreation sites.

Interpretation and resource management

There are many recreation sites, particularly in the countryside, where by design or adaptation interpretive provision is coming into its own as a tool of resource management and protection. For instance, a visitor centre exhibit may influence the behaviour of visitors and a nature trail channel their movement. This management role is important for both providers and consumers, particularly at a time when our countryside resource is becoming accessible to increasing numbers of visitors, more and more of whom are seeking general recreation sites rather than site-specific activities. To these people interpretation has also to promote enjoyable recreational experiences, while at the same time funds to provide for site wardening are limited.

Do not forget that any interpretive programme is likely to have several interdependent objectives, all of which will require evaluation of their achievement and continued appropriate-

ness. Not all programmes will have management objectives, but the concentration here on these objectives in recreation settings is intended to highlight a gap in evaluation practice.

Traditionally interpreters on both sides of the Atlantic have given little regard to site management. The Dartmoor National Park Plan² is a rare case of management declaring the importance of using interpretive services to support policies of influencing visitors' respect for, and behaviour in a recreation resource area. Even so, the Plan did not detail more practical steps to be taken.

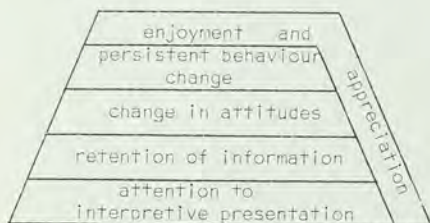
Few of the several published approaches to interpretive planning place any emphasis on site management, and many programmes appear to have been implemented without any well defined purpose or direction. Still, both planned and unplanned facilities are becoming invaluable in site management. In fact, personnel constraints at some sites may necessitate wardening duties and interpretive planning being undertaken by the same person.

Evaluation of resource management objectives

The main aim of interpretation in Britain is considered to be environmental education. The scarcity of evaluations of the effectiveness of achieving management objectives is possibly due in part to the widely held view that objectives of education and comprehension are more important than, and an essential prerequisite to, the achievement of management objectives. Wagar's concept of a hierarchy of interpretive objectives (Figure 1)³ is perhaps seen as a justification for this.

Wagar posits a seemingly inevitable

Figure 1: Wagar's hierarchy of 'evaluation objectives'



sequence of objectives and achievements for effective programmes. Evaluation research, still in its youthful phase, has naturally concentrated on the effectiveness of achieving lower order objectives such as, 'attention given to interpretive presentation' and 'retention of information', aided by a body of theory from educational psychology.

The inevitability of this progression must be questioned. Visitors with a minimum awareness of the resource being interpreted may have no attitudes towards it which could be changed by the interpretation of it. The majority of countryside visitors are likely to have a schema of this resource which is in sympathy with the values of the providers of the facility, and will possess similar attitudes to them. Such congruence surely indicates that interpretive messages exert a more subtle, persuasive, reinforcing influence over visitor behaviour than the term 'persistent behaviour change' suggests. 'Behaviour change' would be difficult to evaluate, of course, needing some kind of base line to be established.

However, where interpretation is intended to influence behaviour and control movement, its effectiveness must be evaluated, and this can be done credibly. Part of the admirable evaluation work of Lee and Uzzell for the Forestry Commission⁴ has pioneered attempts to establish whether visitors consider visitor centres and the surrounding interpreted resource as complimentary experiences. However, their recording of visitor behaviour in forests subsequent to visiting a centre did not proceed beyond the piloting stage.

Evaluation Design

As a postgraduate student, the author has produced and tested an evaluation design specifically for management objectives⁵, which could be incorporated into the routine wardening duties of site staff. It is capable of fairly quickly yielding objective, credible and accurate results which would be utilisation-focused, having direct input into management and interpretive planning.

The design is based upon two methods of data collection;

- a) itinerant observational mapping of visitor movement and behaviour
- b) an interview schedule covering visitors' actual and intended movements and activities, and their interaction with interpretive media.

In testing, the design was used as a summative evaluation of an already implemented programme, though it would also be suitable as a basis for the formative evaluation stage of implementing a new programme. The design could also be adapted to the facilities at a particular site at which it was used. It is best suited to sites such as country parks, which are enclosed or have well defined boundaries and a minimum number of access points.

The site chosen upon which to test the evaluation design was Witley Common in Surrey, a site with a well defined boundary and one main vehicular access point. It is managed by the National Trust for the encouragement of a wide diversity of habitats, and for its amenity and recreational value. An interpretive programme was implemented in 1976 to enhance the study of the natural history and wildlife of this area of woodland, open glades and dry and wet heathland. Although the programme has not been updated since then, it is being used increasingly to control the flow and behaviour of a growing number of visitors, a greater proportion of whom appear to have only a general interest in the countryside.

Witley Common being common land and having only one full-time warden, its sensitive management is aided by a visitor centre with an exhibition, audio-visual programme, leaflets and one permanent member of staff, and by three self-guided nature trails with accompanying leaflets.

After piloting, data collection was undertaken on nine separate days in August 1982, including four Sundays and a Bank Holiday, but ideally it should be conducted at all times of the year, as well as on different days of the week and at all times of the day.

Observational Mapping

Static observation, found by Lee and Uzzell⁴ to be inadequate and uneconom-

ic, may be useful for gauging behaviour in activity honeypots such as car parks and picnic areas, but unobtrusive itinerant observation is far more useful, especially where there are nature trails.

Dividing the trails into sections, the approximate location and activities of visitors on or visible from the trails can be plotted by walking the trails in reverse direction at certain intervals. Likewise, the size and type of group they appear to be in can also be recorded. A table with a list of site-specific activities is the best method of recording visitors as and when they are observed. With site knowledge, other routes can also be selected to observe people not on or visible from trails.

This will instantly yield data on visitor distribution and activity which can be tabulated and manipulated by summary statistics, or preferably displayed in map form for each route on varying time scales.

Interview Schedule

Interviewing is more of a burden on site staff and visitors, it needs more technical support at the design and analysis stages, and gives slower feedback of results than observational mapping. Nonetheless, it is an essential complement to observation in discovering more about routes followed and activities undertaken or intended, as well as about visitor demographics and motivations, visit characteristics, the degree of interaction between visitors and interpretive media, and the influence of those media upon visitor movement and behaviour.

Stratified sampling should be used, based on the proportionate spatial distribution of visitors in the main observation areas, e.g. each trail, car park, etc., with every *n*th visitor being interviewed, dependent upon visitor density. For the purposes of analysis, and given the resources, a sample of at least two or three hundred interviews is necessary.

Some of the interview response data can be analysed in map form - for instance, having asked those walkers who did not consciously follow a nature trail to plot on a simple map the route they had taken, or asked those who had under-

taken non-transient activities to plot where they had done so. Most of the data will need a computer statistics package to tabulate it and then cross-tabulate elements of it by contingency tables. In this way it would be possible to compare the characteristics, movement and behaviour of visitors who had encountered interpretation (i.e. an 'experimental group') with those of a 'control group' who had had no interaction with it. Differences could be tested, for example for statistical significance or discriminating factors. In the same way, actual behaviour of those who did encounter interpretive facilities consciously could be compared with their intended behaviour or motives for visiting the site. Questionnaires, with return envelopes or collecting boxes, could not be used for the Witley Common study, but could be designed along the same lines as the schedule if considered worthwhile.

Witley Common

The nature trails at Witley Common were found to be most effective in channelling movement, and behaviour was predominantly harmonious, but the visitor centre provoked a specific behavioural response from only about 20% of its visitors.

Sixty per cent of visitors were on their first visit to the site. Nearly all of these had been to the visitor centre or intended to do so, though most of them had only a general interest in doing so and emerged from it with only general impressions, and 60% of these visitors subsequently consciously followed one or more nature trails. Thus visitors who were not already so, were oriented into viewing the centre and the trails as complementary.

Only 13% of visitors were found to be on their fifth or more visit in a twelve month period, but in terms of visit-days per year these people are at least as important to management as first-time visitors. The dominant activity of this group was also walking, though they spent less time per visit at the site, were usually in smaller groups and often alone, and generally lived only very short distances from the site. More importantly, they did not consciously follow nature trails, but the routes they were found to follow very often coincided

with those followed by the nature trails. This group did not use the visitor centre to the same extent as first-time visitors, but when they did they seemed to have a more specialist interest in doing so.

Excepting walking, no other activity created pressures at this site which were intense or localised to any great degree. The interpretation at Witley Common is admirably oriented towards both the specialist natural historian and the (more common) visitor with a general interest in the countryside and perhaps the desire for a quiet walk. In so being it acts in the best interest of a valuable resource which will continue to be enjoyed by the public.

Epilogue

It is important that interpretive programmes not only meet the needs of resource management and customer satisfaction, but also of financial accountability and commercial viability. Comprehensive evaluations are needed on a regular basis to examine the public understanding of and response to interpretive messages, as well as to compare the costs and benefits of current or planned programmes with the probable costs and benefits of alternative ways of presenting those messages. The evaluation design illustrated here is intended to throw light upon a relatively neglected area in evaluation studies and help to make future evaluations more comprehensive.

Notes

- 1 Taylor, G (Ed). (1982) Evaluation of Interpretation. SIBH
- 2 Dartmoor National Park Authority, (1977) Dartmoor National Park Plan. Bovey Tracey.
- 3 Wagar, J.A. (1976) Evaluation of Interpretation, Journal of Interpretation 1/1.
- 4 Lee, T.R. and Uzzell, D.L. (1980) Forestry Commission Visitor Centres - An Evaluation Package. Dept. of Psychology, University of Surrey.
- 5 Smith, D.J. (1982) Evaluating the effectiveness of countryside interpretation achieving site management objectives. Unpublished M.Sc. thesis, Loughborough University of Technology.

The Lake District Meeting

Andrew Guest



Sitting in a room full of oil paintings from Turkey may not seem a likely start to a visit to the Lake District, but this is how over 80 people, from the Association of Independent Museums, the Historic Houses Association and the SIBH began their weekend seminar on the theme 'Interpretation and Marketing - Communicating with Visitors', 29-31 October 1982.

The Turkish element was found at the *Abbot Hall Art Gallery* whose founder and present Director, Mary Burkett, spoke on the origins of the museum, subsequent developments, and what she sees as every museum's current challenge, namely to do more for the growing numbers of young unemployed - a listless, neglected group whom museums must speak to.

Founded as recently as 1962, Abbot Hall gives the impression of much longer established elegance. Sitting squarely in its grey stone clothes by the River Kent, it is hard to believe that this was something which, but for the forthrightness of its founder, and I suspect the considerable clout of a county-based group of Friends, might not have been. As well as bringing the local authority round to give support to the museum, Miss Burkett and Abbot Hall have obviously acted as constructive catalysts in aiding museum developments in the whole of the Lake District on a scale which must be unusual for an independent museum.

The ground floor rooms of Abbot Hall are shown as a furnished house, through which one wanders freely, no ropes, no barriers, admiring the fine collection of paintings and furniture, much of it produced for wealthy local patrons by firms such as Gillows of Lancaster who could rival any of the more widely known names of the 18th or 19th centuries. Upstairs an equivalent amount of space is given over to temporary ex-

hibitions, and the museum is not afraid to show the best from far afield.

The Director's breadth of interest (she recounted recent travels in Russia) is clearly a principal ingredient in the success of Abbot Hall. Not that the local aspect is neglected, for Abbot Hall's stables now house the *Museum of Lakeland Life and Industry*. The overall space is not large and it must be regarded as something of an achievement that so much has been packed into it, without leaving a claustrophobic atmosphere. Indeed a very special atmosphere is created by the extent to which visitors are free to roam, for instance, through a furnished room or craftsman's workshop.

Un-natural history

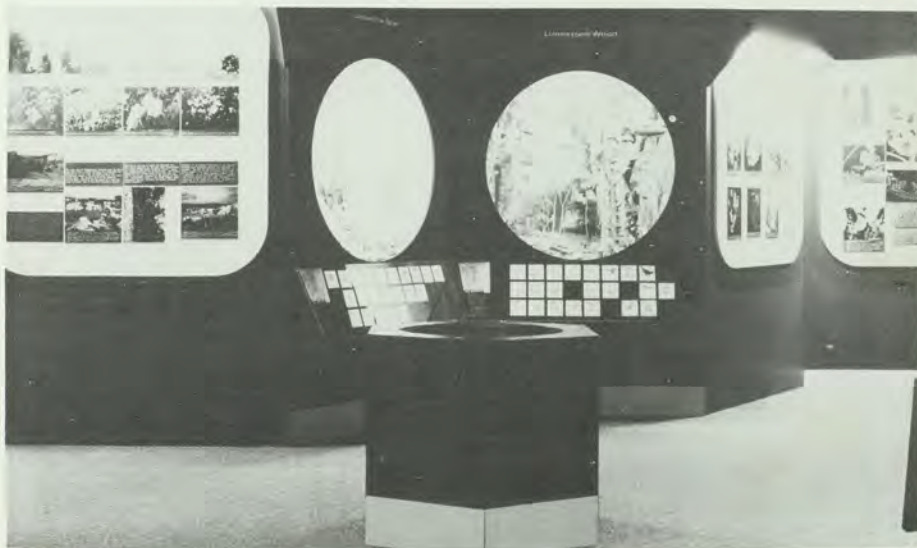
A walk across town brought us to a further feather in Miss Burkett's cap, namely the *Kendal Natural History and Archaeology Museum*, formerly the Borough Museum - a high-ceilinged and problematical Victorian building. Earlier Bill Grange, Curator of this museum, had given us the story of what he had found on arrival at the museum, and how he had gone about changing it and rebuilding the links between museum and community. As he was primarily concerned with the natural history collections, he set his views within the context of changing attitudes to natural history displays since the 18th century.

As the work principally of one man, the new displays are remarkable. The collections have been divided between a reference section where the museum's considerable inheritance of stuffed and glass-cased specimens is mainly kept, and the display area where the emphasis is on providing a comprehensive interpretation for visitors of the natural history of the Lake District. A separately-lit, modular

structure providing both panels and case elements has been built in the towering room, with occasional minor changes of floor level. The presentation is all-embracing, beginning with the geological background, and enlivened by the many settings/dioramas which present chunks of habitat in a very realistic manner, and clearly take the diorama to a stage of near perfection.

One disadvantage of seeing a museum as part of an SIBH gathering is that it is hard to try to be an average visitor when there are 79 other people bumping into you, and when you have only 10 minutes to spend both trying to avoid them and looking at the place itself. But, compared to the Museum of Life and Industry, I wondered whether the density of the material was not taken too far here, with the result that the amount of material packed cleverly into a small floor area overwhelmed and baffled. No doubt the situation could be aided by the provision of an 'orientation' leaflet so that the visitor can be helped to select. The danger is that, in being over-conscious about

KENDAL MUSEUM Right: The Animal Room - what would you do with it? Below: The new-look displays (photo: Bill Orange).



'design' rather than the purposes of the design, one simply replaces one device for another.

One part of the Natural History Museum remains as yet untouched by modern hand and gave us a unique opportunity for a 'before and after' look at exhibition design. The 'Animal Room' is an awesome collection of stuffed animals in and out of glass cases, of all shapes and sizes, around the edge of the room, and in tiers in the centre. Around the tops of the walls runs a continuous frieze of horned heads. This is a view of the animal kingdom at arm's length: that of the traveller, the collector, the big-game hunter, before studies of animal behaviour, Horizon and the total disappearance of several species increased our potential for closer, more sympathetic contact with our fellow mammals. Present plans are to transpose this collection into a similar module to that used for the redisplayed collections upstairs, to give a worldwide treatment of the animal kingdom. I for one wondered whether such a 'serious' view of this collection was the right reading of its implication today. It seemed that the alarming impact of this room had a powerful tale to tell of man's relations to other animals, and that drawing on this, a very positive message about conservation could be relayed, with relevance not only to fauna worldwide, but to the related responsibilities of every Kendal citizen on his own patch.

Trust for the region that includes the Lakes). He spoke about the Trust's enormous interest in the region (as owners of what appeared to be much of the 'cream' of the Lake District landscape, as well as several domestic properties), and how they attempt to balance both their books so that they can pay upkeep costs, and their act so that their members or visitors do not destroy the very thing that they are paying for. He also explained how the Trust, in this region, is moving from a state of discreet presence to a more overt, forward role, where the name of the National Trust is more widely spread, canvassing for support and attention. One aspect of this is providing more information in the way of notices, walk-routes, leaflets, etc., with the feeling that much of the Trust's work in conserving its landscape goes unappreciated. The beginnings of this interpretive programme were outlined, elements in which were Mr Sayle's preference not to use way-marked trails, and his call for a completely damage-proof leaflet-dispenser.

The title of Barry Tullett's talk was 'Image, Impact and Design'. What is design? Both talk and discussion homed in on the real role of the designer, and his relationship with other 'professionals' in meeting the requirements of a display, an exhibition, a publication - any product. First 'Image'. The designer can't be held responsible for an information centre failing to provide the right image through scruffy staff, untidy surroundings, poor maintenance of a display - or can he? A design must have 'Impact', as grabbing the visitor, and grabbing his attention, is more than half of the game. But not too much impact, because the 'means' of design then begins to obscure the 'ends'. Designers are often desperate to have an opportunity to indulge a pet fad, be it a colour, a material, a technique. Is this the fault of the client not briefing his designer or architect correctly, or is it the fault of the designer for not being receptive enough to the needs of his client? The classic museum curator's fear of the designer came out in the discussion. The fear was of being unable to control the beast once let loose. As the client makes

Papers given on Friday evening



The Jekyll and Hyde nature of design was the theme of Barry Tullett, Information Officer for the Lake District National Park. This was a deliberately provocative talk that brought out the colours of the large number of designers in the audience, together with considerable reaction from others. In so doing it obscured the eminent discussability of the interesting presentation by Nigel Sayle (Information Officer for the National

the first step it is surely up to him to know what he wants of a designer - why is he employing him, what is the end product intended for? From then on the two must befriend each other. Their ability to do so will be lessened by any process that results in a polarisation of professions, rather than mutual understanding and cross-fertilisation.

Saturday Morning

If within the field of museums or interpretation there is a lack of understanding or fear of 'design', then there is the same, to an even greater extent, of 'marketing', and I wonder what the smaller museums in particular made of Terry Robinson's exhortation on the value of correct marketing.

His talk was based on the Visitor Centres Marketing Study commissioned by the Countryside Commission from Research Bureau Limited. To many of us, the word 'marketing' conjures up images of clever people persuading consumers to buy something that they don't really need and probably never wanted. I for one believe that nobody ever wanted or needed Sunblest, and that the process that keeps producing and selling millions of loaves daily has little to do with interpretation. However, there can be a nice meaning to marketing, and there are lessons from the way people sell Sunblest, and from other commercial examples where you have to please your customers ('selling goods that won't come back to customers who will' as one member of the audience put it), which are highly relevant to both the commercial and the non-commercial aspects of providing for visitors in museums, visitor centres, etc.

In this context, Terry defined marketing as the business of matching products to needs, in conjunction with the variable factors of pricing, social codes, etc. The process could be used to demote as well as promote a product, and didn't necessarily mean selling, or involve money. The study by RBL was commissioned so that the Commission might receive guidance on good practice in visitor centre management, and so that criteria for the successful marketing of visitor centres might be established. Related to the theme of the conference, the principal

point that Terry focussed on was the very uncertain objectives which this examination of visitor centres revealed. Very few had any management or financial objectives, whilst many had vague education/information/conservation objectives. By contrast questions to the people using them revealed that their priorities were fairly prosaic - shelter/food/rest/play/find out what to do, all outscoring 'learn'. I hope that the Commission will proceed to publish this study, as it will obviously hold up a useful, if embarrassing, mirror to the objectives of the visitor centre phenomenon.

The second talk of the morning quickly introduced another of the potential 'bogey-men' of the museum world, adding to the designer and the marketing man, 'the press'. One of the stimulating features of the weekend was the mingling of different attitudes, which ensured that this was no stuffy, self-congratulatory gathering.

Andrew Wilson, founder of the Lakeland Press Agency and the Lakeland Echo gave an optimistic account of the extent to which the press can aid the functions of museums etc. He gave guidance on how to maximise press potential, with advice on identifying newsworthiness, the strategy of press releases, press invitations/conferences, choice of suitable 'impressive' figures to be associated with an event, etc.

Some members of the audience were clearly not prepared to swallow the 'any news is good news' doctrine, having obviously had disappointments in getting the press to understand their particular message or needs. The necessity of developing a good relationship with your local journalists came over strongly. Andrew Wilson himself has clearly reached such a relationship with Brockhole, our venue for the second half of the morning. But we're not all Brockholes, and we don't all have such thriving local papers, as attentive to their surroundings as one can hardly not be in a district such as the Lakes.

The Brockhole Viewpoint

John Nettleton, Director of Brockhole, the *Lake District National Park Visitor Centre*, since it opened in 1969, introduced the centre, giving an

account of its function (to capture the attention of visitors, to maintain their interest, to motivate and involve them, and provide for their comfort and convenience) and of what it takes to run it. Overall running costs per annum of £230,000, of which 85% supposedly returns in income - a figure that surprised some; 12 permanent staff, with 25 additional seasonal staff; 150,000 visitors per annum.



Brockhole's Assistant Director, Ron Sands, the organiser of this weekend, provided an insight into how this particular Brockhole 'flavour' was produced and promoted. Several themes emerged:-

1. The constant, daily, supply of events and activities at or around Brockhole. Staff are chosen who can contribute to this as well as doing their principal job.
2. The variety of this programme - both in type of activities and in people catered for. Not being afraid of using unusual devices to get people into the place ('free admission for all children with a teddy bear ...')
3. The maximising of any publicity potential to keep the place in the news - far better and cheaper than buying advertising.
4. The benefits of co-operation with other organisations offering scope for other groups to run courses/give talks at Brockhole.
5. Co-operation between attractions in the same area with joint publicity, and paying for publicity material by selling space to local businesses.

Nobody could fail to admire Ron Sands' constant ingenuity and inventiveness, although some doubts were raised about the relevance of Indian Tea (Indian girls in national dress, Indian High

Commissioner - another photograph and mention of Brockhole in the local press) to visitors to the Lake District. But Ron assured us that objectives were constantly re-examined so that the allure of free tea, coffee or whatever didn't take over from the real job in hand.

The picture wasn't quite complete. One longed to know how many people came because of specifically having heard of a particular activity, and how did they hear of it, or did they just turn up?

Whilst at Brockhole we had a view of promotion from another angle, that of the directors of a small company, Omega Educational. This concern organises 'special interest weekends' and other holiday packages that combine learning with leisure. The point that came over was that there is a thirst for learning (at least amongst a certain age group) and that putting it across in the right way will produce satisfaction - and income. The leaders are all specialists in their field who have expertise, enthusiasm and the ability to pass on the absorbing interest of their subject to beginners and to the more experienced alike. Jack and Vera Adams displayed a keen awareness of having to serve their customers right, not unusual, of course, for someone in business.

Embryonic in Ambleside

Ron Sands identified his target markets in terms of the following attitudes: was a person aware/not aware, had he visited/not visited, and re-visited/not re-visited? One place very concerned about people's attitudes to it was the *Lake District History Centre*, in Ambleside, on whose very first year of operation its founder, owner and manager, Mr Reid Yuen, gave a succinct presentation in the morning session. His talk was followed up by a visit in the afternoon. Although giving away little about his experience prior to this venture, his real motivations for setting it up, and about the details of the first year's operation, Mr Yuen reflected on whether his personal ambitions had managed to attract the interest of others and if not, why not.

It was an intriguing opportunity to see a sort of visitor centre in embryo - how could a serious purpose pay for itself (and more?) in the middle of Ambleside, where 12,000 people have been counted walking past on the pavement outside the building. Was the subject matter of inherent interest, was the nature of the experience of this relevant, was it just a question of promoting it in the right way? Mr Yuen's conclusions centred on the question of promotion which he felt had been too bland, and too diffuse. His real market he reckoned as those people on the pavement.

Mr Yuen told us of his 20-year love affair with the Lake District, and his feeling that although visitors to the Lakes came to enjoy many aspects of the area, the history of the place was neglected. When is somewhere a History Centre rather than a museum? Mr Yuen was at pains to point out that he didn't want to be a collector of objects, *per se*, except when they illustrated one of the themes which he had selected for telling. There were 14 themes, including Lakeland's Pioneer Settlers, Enterprise in Tudor Lakeland, Lakeland Sports and Pastimes, Latter Day Lakeland History. The stories are told through photographs, models,

Terry Robinson meets his match: History Centre sports display (photo: D. Uzzell)



murals, copies of documents and objects, original objects, sound-recording and video - quite a medley, and the overall effect has yet to acquire a unifying harmony. Partly this is a question of balance of all the diverse elements, and partly it is an effect of the bland (presumably low-budget) lighting, of lengthy paragraphs of typescript frequently found as the only explanations given. Many felt that here was something that had not received the benefits of an overall design, and that the material displayed reflected more the realisation of the founder's love-affair rather than a desire to stimulate the more humble curiosity of the average Lake District visitor.

Some of the most striking effects were, ironically, made by museum objects: an early relief map of the area, not made much of in the entrance, an over-large very museological-looking case containing a large collection of stone axes, and a huge assemblage of wrestling trophies. The scale models were well-wrought, and interesting effects were made by superimposing, in photographs, people dressed in 'period' (here Roman) clothes against Lake District landscape.

Well-established by Windermere

For the other afternoon visit and a contrast that could hardly have been greater we went to the *Windermere Steamboat Museum*. For starters, a superb collection of not only the steamboats of the lake, but rowing boats, motor-boats and other craft which the lake has borne or inspired, all based on the work of George Pattinson and the Windermere Nautical Trust. The museum has been open only since 1977, and has already developed what seems to be a winning formula.

used for public trips on the lake. The Lake itself and the lakeside setting is very atmospheric. We watched steam-funnels receding silently into the mist.

There is a good shop, with excellent publications and other products including models and boat-plans drawn from the material of the museum. A room that houses a collection of reference material, and could accommodate a group of 60 or so for talks, films etc., is included.

All of these elements are harmonised

WINDERMERE STEAMBOAT MUSEUM.

Right: Conference members viewing the under-cover exhibits (photo: Michael Glen).

Below: The steam yacht 'Esperance' dating from 1869, and the Museum logo.



Functional sheds house those craft that can't be taken on the water and tell the story of the lake and the attraction of its waters over several centuries.

A Boat Dock houses the steamboat collection, several of which have been salvaged from the bottom of the lake, compost heaps or ruined sheds, and all of which are, or will be, in working order. There is one boat which can be

by a sensitive touch - simple display-stands in the shed, background information on boat/engine construction presented clearly in the Boat Dock, a pleasant and effective handbook, and free leaflet.

Conference members were met by David Matthews and Hazel Hawarden. David was not afraid of the specialised nature of the collection and was not going to reduce this. Indeed cater-

ing for the minority who already have the special interest was a high priority. Similarly, he was not going to compromise the shop by stocking high-profit pink teddy bears, and thought that 'ultimately (the shop) does prosper when it is intimately related to the subject of the museum'. He was keen to provide events for local people - including revival of the Lake Festivals. Again the point was made that straight advertising was doubtful value for money. It was better to go for editorial coverage - besides, it keeps you thinking up new angles. The museum made interesting use of well-briefed 'semi-volunteers' as staff. There was some discussion about the pros and cons of formalising this sort of thing as part of a Friends organisation.

Hazel outlined the sensibly modest beginnings of an educational programme, with understanding of the basic needs of a school party - e.g. having somewhere to eat their packed lunches in the dry (solution, in the hull of an old cargo boat.) It was necessary to make personal contact with the teachers - the local Tourist Board holds Teachers Workshops to bring together teachers and the attractions in the area - how many Tourist Boards do this? Many were surprised to learn that last year's visitors didn't number more than 55,000. Was the museum too specialist, (DM said that some thought had been given to widening its scope), and did the museum's title really give an accurate image of the place?

With October evening dampness closing in, there was a general retreat to the comforts of the Prince of Wales Hotel, and, after dinner, discussion on the proceedings so far.

Discussion on Saturday evening

Having been spotted peering down compulsively into the water at Windermere Richard Harrison was invited to comment on the relevance of the Mary Rose experience to the theme of the weekend. A simple point was made that they had little time, but needed lots of money, and it was therefore vital that they carried the public with them. Hence maximum publicity was sought, and this process was greatly assisted by the secondment of

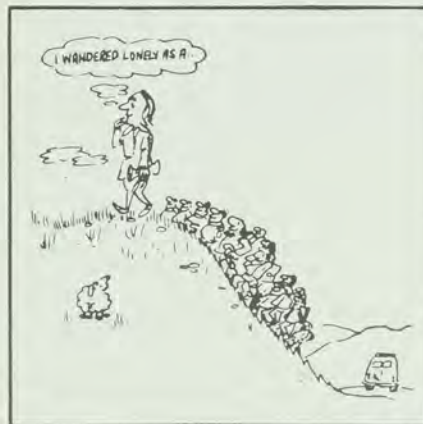
a local newspaper editor as press officer to the Trust. Even so the amount of publicity that they received in the end was a surprise. Mike Glen gave a big tick to personal contact, and remarked that surely this was one of the best forms of marketing. Chiltern Open Air Museum recommended the value of talks to groups such as W.I.'s as better value publicity than posters if you have the time.

Geoff Stansfield (from the chair) advocated the necessity of balancing your various publicity media in a 'communications programme'. Jonathan Bryant attempted to contrast the position of marketing his own museum in N. Staffordshire, with that of the attractions that we had just been seeing, which he described as 'trading off the Lakes', i.e. vying for a share of the huge number of visitors in the area. There was some disagreement as to whether this was how these attractions in the Lakes saw their own position, and it would have been interesting to have had some figures that related numbers of day-visitors to numbers of longer-stay holidaymakers, but this point tied in with one's feelings that much of the marketing we had heard about was geared to the large volume of holiday accommodation in the Lake District. It would not be appropriate to the requirements of somewhere not in such a 'holiday area'.

The 'personal contact' theme came through again in the powerful assertion that museums should be defined in terms of people - their service to personal requirements, their effect on people, rather than in terms of 'subjects', or 'collections'.

A point often used by chairmen (for instance David Bekers in introducing the morning at Brockhole), namely 'wasn't the Lake District being threatened by the number of visitors', received some discussion. But unfortunately Nigel Sayle was no longer with us (nor Barry Tullet, nor John Nettleton - one of the pitfalls of conference-arranging) to discuss this. Terry Robinson felt that the damage caused by tourism was grossly over-emphasised, quoting research from the Recreation Ecology Research Group, and that roadworks and quarrying, for instance, were more destructive in

this part of the world. Most cases of 'destruction', e.g. footpath erosion, were soluble by comparatively straightforward management arrangements, several of which had already been demonstrated. Pressed for views from Land's End, a spokesman for the new developments there said he thought that Land's End was going to 'be all right'. A tantalising toying with an important subject which SIBH could perhaps pursue at greater length on another occasion.



(acknowledgment to Mountain Goat)

The 'paradise vale'

The fragility of the Lake District, and the anxiety that people should treat it, its people, and its way of life seriously, rather than look on it just as a huge pretty picture, were thoughts original to Wordsworth. He is also credited with the first pronouncement about the need to preserve the Lake District as 'a sort of national property'. So it was fitting that the latter part of the weekend should be given over to Wordsworth.

This began on the Saturday evening with a visit to Rydal Mount, Wordsworth's family home from 1813 till after his death in 1850. The house was re-purchased by the poet's great-granddaughter in 1970, and has been partly lived in, partly open to the public ever since. Darkness prevented us from making out much of what the publicity describes as '4½ acres of garden landscaped by William and described as one of the most int-

eresting small gardens to be seen in England'. But we were admitted to the house which, with the exception of the souvenir and publications stall was lit by candles. This had recently become the custom every Thursday evening for public admission (not, apparently, with great success). The effect is also created for special groups, accompanied by readings of poetry, with madeira wine and cake. It was unfortunate that we were provided with the candles, but not the cake, or the poet's words, as it seemed that the evocation of atmosphere through those media would be one of the house's strongest cards. The atmosphere created by the decorative, rather than authentically period, form of lighting was interesting, but no considerable attempt had yet been made to set the house in its Wordsworthian period (e.g. significant subsequent architectural alterations to the house have not been reversed, the furniture and decoration a rather mixed bag). The end-result was rather unsatisfying, and with explanation confined to somewhat brief labels and portable 'bats', there were few opportunities to find out more. The effect of the 'conference factor' may have been high here, and it would have been pleasant had we been given a guided tour by one of the two curators.

At home in Grasmere

The following morning (any proceedings of interest that intervened I am unable to recount) we went back in time to visit Wordsworth's home of 1799-1808, which by rights one should visit first, and which was shelter to his most fertile period of composition.

Dove Cottage was purchased by a Trust that was established in 1890 to secure the 'eternal possession' of the cottage for 'all those who love English poetry all over the world'. With its library of over 100,000 manuscripts, the Trustees have truly created the mecca for studies of Wordsworth and English poetry. Summer schools are held. There is Dove Cottage itself, beautifully 'conserved', but not typical of a cottage of the time, for it was first a pub. Yet with small rooms furnished sparsely but carefully, to great

effect, the house was left to be felt as such rather than as a series of displays behind barriers. And the final element in the whole group is the brand-new 'Grasmere and Wordsworth Museum', housed in an adjacent barn-building, at a cost of £320,000.



A visit should ideally begin with the Cottage itself. A guided tour around the house (not obligatory but we were told that 80% of the 58,000 visitors apparently take the option) in the company of the best guide to anything anywhere I have ever experienced, introduces the visitor to Grasmere in Wordsworth's time, to life within the house, the visits of friends, other poets, the attitudes of the village, the strange nature of the man. The story is intricately woven around the house, the objects in it - virtually all used by the

Interpreting a poet and his landscape: the Wordsworth Museum (photo: R.S. Woof)



Wordsworths - with the words of Dorothy, William and their father's comments recorded.

The Museum has been built to the highest standards in terms of light, air and security specifications. Thus it can house both 'the Wordsworth treasures' themselves, and paintings, drawings and watercolours on loan from national collections, as well as temporary exhibitions. Many found refreshing the pursuit of quality and the refusal to duck the issue of the poet, his intellect, and the artistic movements of which he was part. There was praise also for beginning the treatment of Wordsworth by going back to an examination of the landscape on which his work was based, and for the appreciation of which his attitudes were so much a milestone. The very apt contrasting comparison was made to Stratford, venue of the SIBH summer conference and AGM, where it was felt that the nature of Shakespeare's literary genius received hardly any attention from the various exhibitions or the interpretation in the properties.

The standard of presentation in this museum was high - the work had been done using two 'key' artists as supervisors, with much done through MSC

projects and a Research Project by Newcastle University students. The attempt to avoid being over-run by the inevitable 'wordiness' of the literary subject-matter produced the commissioning of artists' work in visual media, inspired by Wordsworth's work. Expert, evocative, landscape photography was used, aiming to render images as powerful as those Wordsworth received, plus effective landscape and geographical models. The only doubts raised were whether we had been over-fortunate in being given introductions to our perception of this place by Dr Robert Woof, Secretary to the Dove Cottage Trustees who orientated us, and inspired us with the clarity of his enthusiasm. Would others, not so fortunate, have needed something more (an AV programme was suggested, though space doesn't yet permit) so as to orientate them? After that guiding around Dove Cottage, I wonder.

Back to school

Daring to go against the tide of the 2000-strong Windermere marathon, the party made its way to Hawkshead. I've not yet been able to get beyond my view of the town being coloured by the eminently practical, but featureless, car-park which you are more or less compelled to make for, the large 'Norseman' cafe that dominates this,



(acknowledgment to Mountain Goat)

and the gift/craft shops that flank, like Scylla and Charybdis, your route into the village. This is a form of destruction by tourism. There is little direction to the Hawkshead

Grammar School, although the Information Centre, next in line to the Norseman, might have encouraged us. This is a shame as, within the school's door, you step back in time not just 100, or 200 (Wordsworth was a pupil) or 300, but 400 years. Due to its no doubt deliberate conservatism up till its closure in 1909, and its being preserved by its governors since then, a feeling of all this time can be had. Bunks and walls and window-sills are deeply engraved by years of wandering minds, and upstairs the library that has accumulated since its foundation in 1585 remains.

Obviously not a mecca like Dove Cottage, and consequently with less established support, it yet has great potential, and now has a full-time Curator in John West. John is a refugee from Dove Cottage since this spring, with clearly different ideas on developing a historic property, and happier re-dressing 17th century bindings than coping with an air-conditioning plant.

The school receives 8000 visitors a year. An adult aversion to school-rooms has been observed to turn back from the entrance perhaps the same number of people again. Signs to the school are few, awareness of the school is not high, even at the information centre, but this is hardly surprising given a three years' reign by a custodian who was as likely to be 'gone to the ferry' with some hapless traveller, as at his post.

The present Curator wishes to expand the use made of the school but, with secure endowments, doesn't yet have a desperate need to increase income from visitors. Besides, he is acutely aware (from his home that lies by Dove Cottage) of the particular environmental pressure that can be created by the passage of 58,000 visitors over a 6-8 month period. He has no wish to inflict this on the residents next to the Grammar School, although the rest of the centre of the town must be putting up with this already. It will be interesting to see how these issues are resolved and in what way the potential of this place, its collection of books and the story of school life over 300 years that it tells, will be realised.

Final discussion

A substantial, but not a complete audience gathered on the boards of Hawkshead Town Hall for final comments on the weekend's experiences, very much warmed by John West's honest approach to his situation and unable quite to square this with also having enjoyed the Dove Cottage experience.

But the first opinion expressed, by Andrew Jenkinson, returned to a more general theme. We had seen attractions serving the existing Lake District market, but we hadn't seen much interpretation of the landscape itself - the fabric of the Lake District, which after all is basic, since people come here seemingly because of this; should more not be done in this connection? Jonathan Bryant (from the chair) asked whether it was not enough for people to enjoy the landscape, without it having to be interpreted to them. Derek Baylis felt that you could draw a fairly clear line between those people who came to actively enjoy the landscape, and those who either did nothing, or visited specific attractions. Brockhole, he felt, served well as an interpretation of the region, leaving room for a variety of specialist places such as Dove Cottage and the Steamboat Museum.

The discussion then moved on to the more general point of marketing and customers. How much do the attitudes of customers affect their ability to respond? Do we proceed with missionary zeal to attempt to convert everybody, with a different approach for every type of market, or do we just serve those who profess their desire to know more? Do the customers know what they want, what is best? Brian Holtam made a forceful case for the answer 'no' to this, it being the marketing man who should know his products the best. He pleaded for the greater use of statisticians in the field of marketing and interpretation. Jonathan Bryant added 'but customers know what they like'.

The discussion turned to the presentation of history, and revealed a sharp but not extensively explored difference of opinion on whether this should start from time past and work forwards

or, as some claimed educational orthodoxy would support, start with the familiar (which was assumed to be the present) and work away from that base, going gradually back in time. I suspect that different situations require different treatment, that there are few (even amongst the orthodox educational world) examples of the complete reverse progression, and that probably a bit of both is the best solution. The argument came back to the point that the end-result should be enjoyment by the perceiver, rather than the meeting of any ideal theoretical criteria.

Invited to put the view from Devon, representatives from the Coldharbour Mill Museum related a contrasting set of circumstances that illustrated perhaps, the uniqueness of the Lake District situation. At oldharbour a valuable resource had been rescued from threatened destruction and, as a base for extra visitors to an area, was being used to assist the local economy. A similar capability was reported as being at work in Ireland where, in order to spread visitors out of Limerick evenly into the surrounding countryside, 'interpretive facilities' were being planned virtually in a ring round the city, at suitable distances.

With that somewhat forbidding example of interpretive planning ringing in my mind, your correspondent was obliged to forsake the discussion in favour of a travel commitment with British Rail. But count me as a 're-visitor' Will Dove Cottage keep up the high standards, survive the visitors and keep them coming? How will the Steamboat Museum develop? Will the History Centre get its act together? Will the potential of the Grammar School be realised?

Finally, tribute and thanks must be paid to Ron Sands, the tireless organiser of the conference. The weekend could not have been so stimulating without his intimate knowledge of the area and all the places visited. It was impressive to see the thriving and constructive relationship that seemed to exist between Brockhole and all the other members of the Lake District family.

North Craven Heritage Scheme

Mrs E A Read, Hon. Curator Museum of North Craven Life

The scheme comprises an interpretive exhibition, occupying the first floor of the Museum of North Craven Life, together with a series of guide cards which explore particular topics in greater depth and where possible incorporate a trail so that visitors can follow up 'on the ground' what they have seen in the Museum. The cards are designed so that they may also be used independently of the Museum displays.

The Exhibition

The aim of the exhibition is to interpret for local people and visitors alike, the individuality of North Craven as a region, so that they may afterwards look at their surroundings with fresh insight and appreciation. The dominant theme is the landscape of North Craven which has had a vital influence on all aspects of the life of the area. The other themes - settlement, communications, farming, extractive industries and a look into the future - are all closely inter-related and demonstrate their common dependence on the landscape.

The Official Opening

The exhibition was formally opened by the Most Hon. the Marquis of Normanby, Lord Lieutenant of North Yorkshire, on 28th June, 1980. Lord Normanby was well pleased with the detail and coverage of the displays, and in speaking of the Carnegie United Kingdom Trust's role in supporting the scheme, laid particular emphasis on the results which could be achieved by combining local effort with financial help and expertise from outside.

Visitor Response

This has been most favourable and since the opening of the exhibition the number of requests for group

visits to the Museum has greatly increased. A particularly fruitful relationship is developing with Bradford Metropolitan Council's Outdoor Education Centre at Ingleborough Hall, Clapham and it seems real value to schools. There has also been an encouraging response from individuals and family groups, including those with professional experience of interpretation, who have told us that the displays have indeed deepened their appreciation of the area. The only criticism received is that the exhibition is lacking in three-dimensional objects, but during the past few weeks we have attempted to rectify this while at the same time ensuring that the 'story line' remains unblurred.

Guide Cards

These have not yet received a real trial, since they have been available only from the end of October, but initial response is encouraging. They are proving particularly popular with schools. An interesting trend is that people are buying sets of all five cards in preference to individual titles. We plan to make available protective PVC card holders to increase the suitability of the cards for outdoor use. During the coming season the cards will be sold by the National Park at their Information Centres and at other local outlets.

General Comment

A feature of the finished exhibition which we ourselves greatly appreciate is the flexibility, combined with a totally 'uncluttered' look which the Area Museums Service staff have built into the design. This has enabled us to make modifications and additions to individual panels without spoiling the overall appearance or integrity of the display. A particularly satisfying development since the opening has been the small but highly relevant number of objects which have been given or loaned to enhance the displays, e.g. Settle's old town stocks and a packhorse bell for the 'On the Move' section. It is encouraging that the exhibition, far from remaining static, has the ability to adapt to future developments.

Report prepared for the Carnegie UK Trust, February 1981.

News and Notes

MICHAEL WHO?

We have to make apologies to a couple of Michaels. In issue 22, the two photographs of the day at Northwich were wrongly attributed to Michael Quinion, whereas the expert cameraman was in fact Michael Glen. M.G., as everyone knows, is a marvel of audio-visual wizardry but even he has to be present at an event before he can photograph it. M.G.'s pictures were actually screened from colour prints - so don't hesitate to send us yours for reproduction when reporting events or visits.

TRUST IN EDUCATION

The National Trust for Scotland has just published, in collaboration with the BP Educational Service, a guide to the educational facilities provided at Trust properties. A well produced and informative document prepared by W K Ritchie of Moray House College of Education, it briefs teachers on all NTS properties open or accessible to school parties, detailing location, facilities and the teaching opportunities presented by the site. And not content to wait upon the vagaries of school and local authority purchasing policies, complimentary copies have been distributed to all Head Teachers in Scottish schools, to local authorities and organisations connected with education. Such munificence could hardly be expected to extend south of the border, but bona fide organisations wanting to emulate this splendid achievement might try to beg a copy from Mrs Marista Leishman, Head of Education at the NTS, 5 Charlotte Square, Edinburgh EH2 4DU.

ACTON SCOTT

The working farm museum at Acton Scott had produced its own teachers' guide. During 1980 a small group met to consider the use of the museum by schools and over the following eighteen months summarised their ideas into a booklet called Horse Harrow Harvest. It is 'not meant to be comprehensive or directive, but suggests possible avenues of study and activities that

can be developed in the classroom'. It also makes a lot of practical points regarding preparing for and following up the visit. Write for it to Wenlock Lodge, Acton Scott, near Church Stretton, Shropshire.

BANC ON IT

Conservation: education or learning? is the title of conference proceedings published recently by the British Association of Nature Conservationists (BANC). Edited and introduced by Chris Park, it contains six papers including one from the doyen of the environmental education movement, Sean Carson. The meeting on conservation education was one of a number BANC has or will be holding. The organisation also publishes a quarterly journal (ECOS) and occasional special reports. Copies of this document for £1.50 post included from Richard Grove, Darwin College, Cambridge.

TUNBRIDGE WELLS

Tunbridge Wells Borough Council are arranging to have a Victorian Week in 1984 in connection with British Heritage Year and the British Tourist Authority's aim to encourage 'Meet the British' schemes. The hope is to open a number of Victorian houses to the public (on a limited basis) and to stage events contributing to a fuller understanding of the Victorian way of life. The Borough Secretary R J Stone has written to SIBH to see if we can offer any help or advice. Members who have experience of such events are invited to contact Mr Stone with ideas and suggestions - Town Hall, Tunbridge Wells, Kent TN1 1RS. (Tel. 26121)

CAREER ADVICE

The Council for Environmental Education (CEE) and the Committee for Environmental Conservation have just issued a revised and extended version of the 1977 'Careers for Environmentalists' booklet. Careers in the Environment - a first guide answers those vital questions like 'Where are the openings?' 'What qualifications are needed?' and 'What training is available?'

The document brings together clear and up to date advice from specialists

on many areas of work relating to environmental conservation or management.

It has twenty-two sections describing the work, educational requirements and openings at 16+ 18+ and graduate level for each career area and provides a full list of further references, contacts and addresses for each career section.

It's 52 (A5) pages, price £1.25 inc p+p and is good value. Order it from CEE, School of Education, University of Reading, London Road, Reading RG1 5AQ.

SCRAMBLE

Scramble is the quarterly Journal of the Scottish Countryside Rangers' Association which aims to increase awareness of the complexities of a Ranger's job among members of the Association and selected outside organisations and individuals. Articles in the last year have included an appraisal of the West Highland Way, a visit to Moray Estates and another to Northern Ireland, articles on wildlife recording and rural archaeology, as well as reviews of products, publications, courses and conferences of general interest.

SCRA believes that a wider readership would be interested in subscribing to Scramble and invites subscriptions at £5.00 per annum (four issues). Cheques, etc. should be crossed and made payable to the Scottish Countryside Rangers' Association. Send to the Editor: Nic Bullivant, Lochore Meadows Country Park, Crosshill, Lochgelly, Fife KY5 8BA.

ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION RESEARCH DOSSIER

Do Field courses actually influence attitudes to the environment? Does formal environmental education achieve any substantial changes in perception of the environment? How far do curricula in the formal and non-formal sectors of education reflect environmental considerations and themes? Is there sufficient and appropriate provision for environmental education in terms of facilities and resources?

There is a dearth of research in the area of environmental education in

Britain. Very little funded research has been carried out, and no national register of research in aspects of environmental education has been compiled. Progress in the growth of environmental education in this country has undoubtedly been slowed by the lack of a firm research base.

To help remedy this situation, the Council for Environmental Education is compiling a Research Dossier. This comprises references to completed and current research relating to environmental education (methods, evaluation, effectiveness, extent, provision etc) both published and unpublished. The dossier will be added to over time and the information be made available to enquirers - particularly researchers wanting to know about work that has been or is currently being undertaken.

The dossier will include details of author(s), title and subject of study, research status, publisher and/or where held, with contact address.

The dossier was begun in February 1983 and contributions and additions to the dossier are very much welcomed. Publicity for the scheme would also be appreciated.

Address Research Dossier, Council for Environmental Education School of Education, University of Reading, London Road, Reading RG1 5AQ

Enquiries to Stephen Sterling
(0734) 875234 ext. 218.

EDINBURGH WALKS

Edinburgh New Town Conservation Committee have a programme of Guided Walks in the Georgian New Town from 11 May until 14 September inclusive, for the year 1983:

Monday and Tuesday at 10a.m. Cost £1
Thursday at 2p.m. Cost £1
Wednesday at 7.30p.m., including a conducted tour of a private house with wine. Limited to 25 Cost £3

In addition, Guided Walks will be arranged for interested organisations on any evening Monday - Friday (except Wednesday), with a house visit and wine, at the cost of £37.50p. for numbers up to 25. All walks are led by specially trained guides

Further details from Mrs Catherine

Wood, Publications Secretary, Edinburgh
New Town Conservation Committee, 13A
Dundas Street, Edinburgh, EH3 6QG
(Tel. 031-556 7054)

COMMISSION OPENS UP

"The newly - independent Countryside Commission is committed to a more open way of working" says C.C. Director Adrian Philips in the first issue of Countryside Commission News. This is a beautifully produced, full colour, eight page tabloid newspaper, designed to both inform and elicit opinion and collaboration. It also obviously intends to personalize the image of the C.C. by putting faces to names of staff (there's a feature in the first issue on who's who in the Bristol office). This is a worthwhile endeavour that deserves a lively and responsive readership. If you haven't seen a copy try writing to the Editor, Paul White, at C.C., John Dower House, Crescent Place, Cheltenham, Glos. GL50 3RA. If you have, write to him anyway. A letters feature is planned for future issues.

CHESTER CONSERVATION FILM

Chester City Council has recently completed a short film on the subject of Conservation.

The film, entitled Chester - Progress in Conservation, outlines the City Council's award winning conservation programme and illustrates many recent projects. It has been made for the City's Department of Technical Services by the Institute of Advanced Studies at Manchester Polytechnic and is funded by the European Prize for the Preservation of Historic Monuments, which was won by the City Council in 1981. The film is intended to appeal to the 'lay' audience as well as to those with a special interest in building preservation. It provides an excellent introduction to the problems of conservation in an historic city and shows some of the many solutions which have been found by the Conservation Team in Chester.

The recording is in colour and lasts 20 minutes. It is available in 16mm film or as a video cassette. The cost of the film will be approximately £100 and that of the video will be about £50 - £60, depending upon the

type of video system in use.

Anyone interested in purchasing either the film or video, or requiring further information write to Miss Eileen Willshaw in the Conservation Section Department of Technical Services, City Council Offices, The Forum, Northgate Street, Chester, CH1 2HN.

LIVING MEMORIES

Living Memories is a practical guide to tape recording the past by Ken Howarth, Director of the North West Sound Archive. It is due out soon from Pennine Heritage Network, The Birchcliffe Centre, Hebden Bridge, HX7 8DG, at approximately £2.95. Illustrated, and with over eighty pages, it discusses the nature of Oral History, Equipment, Interviews, Contemporary Sounds, Cataloguing, Transcription, and Archive Collection - in fact all you need to get started in a relatively neglected aspect of heritage recording and interpretation through sound.

LOSEHILL HALL REPORT

The Challenge of Conservation in Naturparke, Parcs Naturels, National Parks (U.K.) and equivalent reserves is the title of the full report of the papers, discussions and conclusions presented at the European Conference held at Losehill Hall, April 12th-16th 1982. The fully illustrated, 77 page report includes translations (German and French) of summary, discussions and conclusions.

Copies are available from: Peter Townsend, Principal, Peak National Park Study Centre, Losehill Hall, Castleton, Derbyshire, United Kingdom. Prices, including postage and packing are as follows:

Britain	£6.00
Europe	£6.70 (Airmail)
Outside Europe	£6.70 (Surface Mail)

AIM SEMINARS

The Association of Independent Museums has organised for 1983 a series of Seminars, both comprehensive in range, and varied in location, hoping to attract a wide range of professional interests.

April 23rd 1983 A Seminar on The

Designer and The Small Museum, at the Museum of East Anglian Life, Stowmarket
May 12th Company Museums, at the Institute of Directors, London, in association with the Museums Association and the Inst of Directors.
June 20th An Education Service for Smaller Museums at The Durham Light Infantry Museum
September 8/9/10th Museums and the Community, Ulster Folk Museum, at Cultra, Belfast
October 28th Museum Public Relations at Torfaen Museum Trust, Gwent
November 25th Setting up a New Museum, at Salisbury and South Wiltshire Museum, Salisbury

WESTON PUBLICATION

The 100th anniversary of Weston-super-Mare's stone-built sea wall and esplanade next month is being celebrated by the publication of a new booklet which helps young people to find out more about it. 'The Sea Front' is the first of the new 'Exploring Weston-super-Mare' series of illustrated questionnaire trails for school parties and young visitors, published by Weston Civic Society.

The trail takes young explorers from Birnbeck Island to the Beach Lawns, dealing with fishermen, pier-builders, smugglers and nude bathers on the way.

Review

Administration of Recreation, Parks and Leisure Services (second edition) by Lynn S. Rodney and Robert F. Toalson from John Wiley and Sons £20.75p

How can goals be reached with minimum effort and maximum efficiency? That is a problem which tests all management and managers including those concerned with recreation and park administration. The mobilisation of an organisation's various departments together with manipulating the relationships and resources to achieve the overall objectives is the essence of the administrative process.

Whilst Toalson and Rodney are primarily concerned with administration of public provision in the United States, their basic thesis is sound practice for

The place where invalids had to pay to drink sea water is featured, and youngsters are asked why the Grand Pier was meant to be 1½ miles long. Maps, pictures, information and questions make sure that they understand what they are seeing.

The trails are produced as a result of the Civic Society's work with local young people, which also involved teenagers working under the Youth Opportunities Programme. A grant from the Queen's Silver Jubilee Trust - which exists to support and fund projects in which young people carry out work which will benefit other young people - helped with publication costs.

The questionnaire trails will fill a gap in the existing local studies material available for young people, and can form the basis of project work at school and at home. They have been produced in collaboration with Weston Teachers' Centre, the Woodspring Museum, and Weston Central Library, who made material and resources available.

The 20 page booklets are illustrated with period pictures and maps, and are suitable for children aged 10 - 14. They are available, price 30p., from the Civic Society's shop Weston Guild, 28 Orchard Street, or from Woodspring Museum.

other societies. 'The quality and success of our park and recreation programmes,' they say, 'depends primarily upon the skill and insight of the leadership that understands administrative concepts.'

The book is an introduction to the general field of recreation management and is designed for a relatively wide audience including Board and Elected members.

Could we ever hope, let alone expect, elected members in Britain to digest such a volume? The authors successfully relate proven practice and recent research to the theory of administration. They also attempt to develop an understanding of the problems facing park staff.

Although the detail of perhaps up to a third of the Chapters have but passing, or comparative, interest to people working outside of the States there is

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interpretation newsletter

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much to be learnt from its pages. The core of operational procedures, the conceptual framework for administration and clear presentations of developing objectives are very valid. Equally the practical guidelines and empirical examples for personnel practices, budget control, office practice and programme administration are areas of work often neglected in our training curricula.

The volume is expensive, and because of

this, combined with its essentially American basis I find it hard to recommend - unless your hard pressed budgets can really stand it. It is a shame that a cheaper more relevant volume is not available to assist the administration of recreation in Britain. Perhaps the new Institute of Leisure and Amenity Management will meet this challenge?

Terry Stevens

Sightseeing in 1981

The latest ETB survey of visits to tourist attractions in England has recently been published. The Board have issued the following summary:

There are accurate admission figures or reasonable estimates for 2,285 sightseeing attractions in England, three-quarters of which are historic buildings, museums or art galleries.

Of the 157 million visits counted in 1981, 51 million were to museums and galleries, 48 million to historic buildings, 16 million to wildlife attractions, 7½ million to gardens, and 35 million to other attractions. 57% were paid admissions, 62% were south of the Severn - Wash line, and nearly a quarter were within London.

53 attractions, with more than half a million visits each, accounted for 36% of all visits. The most visited attraction in England in 1981 was the Science Museum (3,847,718 visits), whilst the Tower of London attracted the most paid admissions (2,088,443). The Plackpool Pleasure Beach is estimated to have attracted between 6 and 7 million visitors, but no accurate count has yet been carried out.

Between 1980 and 1981 there was a 7% drop in the total number of visits in England. Taking account of new attractions and closures, there was a 9% fall in visits to historic buildings and wildlife attractions and a 7%

fall at gardens, museums and galleries. A miscellany of non-traditional attractions suffered less badly with a 3% drop. This was mainly because of a growth in admissions to a few heavily visited leisure parks such as Alton Towers and Thorpe Park. The main factors thought to have caused the overall decline in visits are the economic recession, bad weather in the first half of the year, a drop in tourism, and increased petrol prices. Over the five year period 1976 to 1981 there was a 2% drop in visits to a constant sample of sightseeing attractions, varying from +5% for gardens to -16% for wildlife attractions.

Amongst those attractions which managed to increase their visits in 1981, the main positive factor was improved advertising and publicity. Other important factors were the introduction of extra attractions or facilities and the organisation of special events or exhibitions. Publicity on television programmes such as Chronicle, Gardener's World, and Nature Watch was particularly helpful. Joint promotions and transport events were frequently mentioned as being beneficial.

The report also covers trends in revenue, overseas visitors, opening hours, admission charges, new attractions, and demand relative to capacity. A new feature in this year's report is an analysis of capital expenditure. Much detailed information is given on the factors influencing visitor trends.