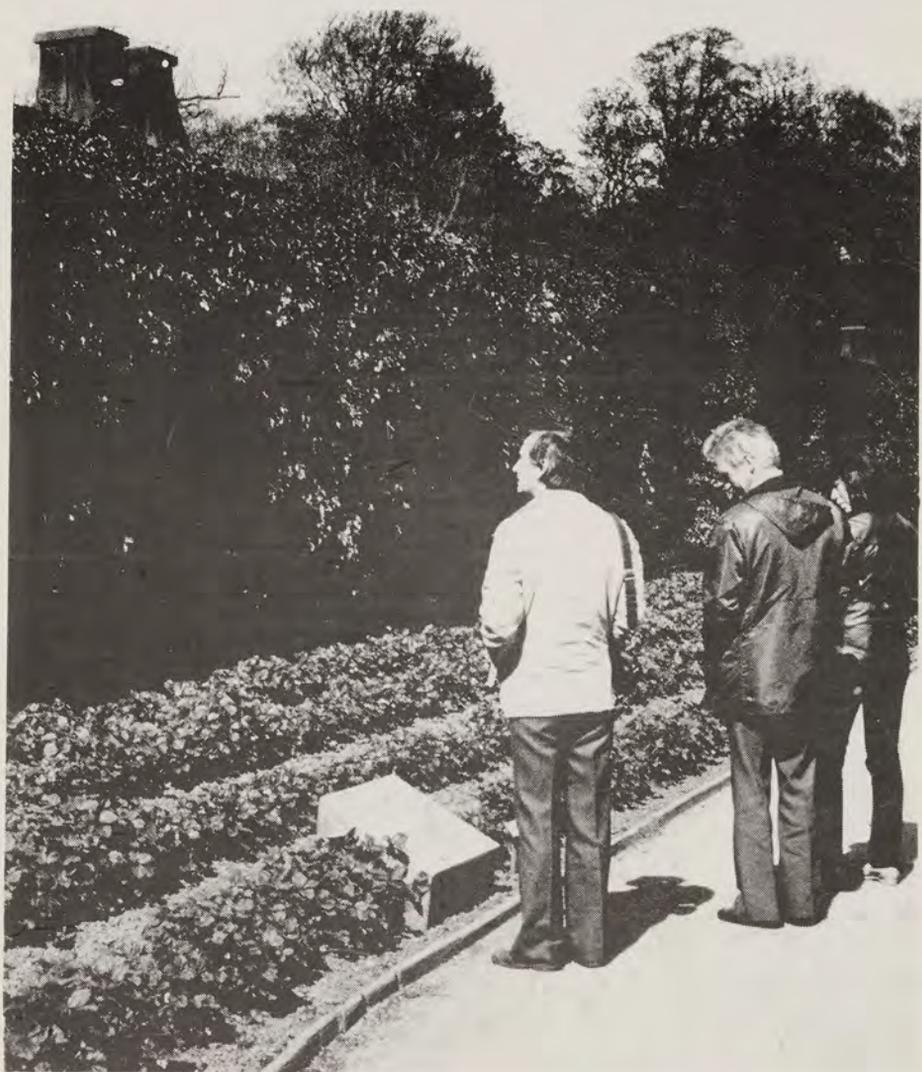


interpretation

NUMBER 24

SUMMER 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

'Interpretation', the newsletter of the Society for the Interpretation of Britain's Heritage, is published three times a year, on April 1st, August 1st and December 1st. It is distributed free to members. Non-members may buy copies at 70p each.

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Viewpoint: Away with Words?

"The written word" says the valuable new publication *Effective Interpretive Exhibitions** "is the most widely used medium of interpretation". Author Geoff Stansfield gives its major advantages as being a universal means of communication (at least in literate societies) and being cheap. He might have added that it is also by far the most precise, subtle and flexible medium when properly used, capable of communicating both simple and complex ideas and information. Its effectiveness is more heavily researched than that of all the other interpretive media available to us.

So this is a brief plea to interpreters to recognise that the appropriate response to evidence which suggests that text in exhibitions is failing to reach its audience is not always to ditch it in favour of other media. Rather we should apply some of the simple tests summarised in this report and take note of the criteria of legibility, comprehensibility and exhibition ergonomics identified. As Stephen Herbert said in *Interpretation* 15, there's nothing intrinsically wrong with "books on walls" as long as they are good books and as long as they don't necessarily exclude use of additional techniques. If the time ever comes when visitors automatically feel deprived if they aren't offered sophisticated media technology on every occasion, interpretive goals may well be lost from sight in a McLuhanesque world of permanent confusion between Medium and Message.

Use this publication for information on other topics too - especially exhibition design and layout, visitor routing and behaviour, effectiveness of various display techniques and lighting. A checklist for the exhibition planner can easily be drawn up using the many key conclusions the author has culled from the literature on exhibition creation. There is no more succinct summary of the main findings of research into the subject or (where research is lacking) of accepted consensus opinion about it.

Anthony Fyson

*Available from the Countryside Commission, John Dower House, Crescent Place, Cheltenham, Glos. GL50 3RA. Price £3.39 post free.

Letters

LANDS END

Having read with interest the article in the current issue of 'Interpretation' on the SIBH seminar in the Lake District last Autumn (which I attended), I felt that you would wish to be 'tantalized' a little more by current news of Lands End.

Last September work began on conversion of two dilapidated barns into 'The Man and the Sea' and the 'Lands End Heritage' exhibitions. They were officially opened on 23 March 1983 by Michael Montague, Chairman of The English Tourist Board. In addition to this, the famous 'First and Last House in England' has been opened as a craft workshop where seven craftsmen, ranging from a spinner to an ivory carver work and sell their crafts.

I enclose information about this first phase of the Lands End Scheme, and would like to take this opportunity to extend an open invitation to the SIBH to visit Lands End and see how we are succeeding in transforming a much abused part of our heritage into some-

CALL FOR MEETINGS

Regional meetings are an essential part of the activities of SIBH. They are a means by which members can meet each other, catch up on news, discuss developments in interpretive practice and see the work of colleagues.

I am beginning to organise the Regional Meeting Programme for next year. Would you be willing to organise a meeting or event? The meetings can be on any subject or issue: new techniques; particular problems; public/private initiatives;

FORTHCOMING MEETINGS OF ORGANISATIONS AFFILIATED TO SIBH

INFORMATION NEEDS OF PROFESSIONALS

14th Sept. Leisure Studies Assoc.
Contact Tony Veal, Dept. Extension Stud.
Poly of North London, Prince of Wales Rd
Kentish Town, London.

BIENNIAL CONFERENCE 16th-18th Sept.
Brit. Assoc. Friends Museums
Contact BAFM Conf. Sec., Nat. Mus. of
Wales, Cathays Park, Cardiff CF1 3NP

thing worthwhile. If a date for such a visit could be arranged, we would be pleased to act as hosts.

Miss J E Goddard
Retail Manager Davstone Holdings

*See back page for 1984 visit notice.

THE HISTORY OF PROVINCIAL MUSEUMS

Many of the national museums have had their histories written, but the history of provincial museums and their collections has been almost ignored.

Stuart Davis of the Local History Department at Birmingham and I are interested in holding a one-day seminar on the subject in Birmingham in the early part of 1984. I should be interested to hear from anyone.

a) who would like to attend (no deep commitment necessary at this stage) and

b) feels they could contribute a talk on some aspect of the history of provincial museums and their collections. We would also be interested in brief reports on work in progress.

Gail Durbin Castle Museum
Education Officer Norwich NR1 3JU

unique sites; the marketing and promotion of places and events; the economics of interpretation. There is no limit to the possibilities.

If you are prepared to organise a meeting you will be given every assistance so please do not feel that it will be an onerous or difficult task. If you would like to discuss this or receive further details write or telephone: David Uzzell, Department of Psychology, University of Surrey, Guildford, Surrey, GU2 5XH, with your ideas today!

SOCIAL AND INDUSTRIAL HISTORY IN S WALES

20th Sept. Contact L.J. William Davies
Soc. Hist. Curators Group, Welsh Folk
Mus., St Fagans, Cardiff CF5 6XB

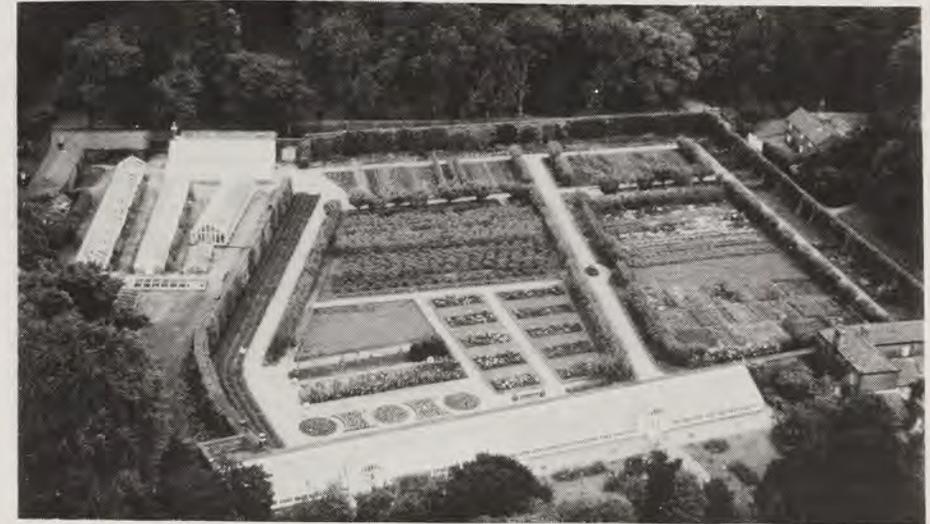
FARM LIVESTOCK AND MUSEUMS 7th Oct.
Contact C. Page, Soc. Hist. Curators Grp.
Manor Farm Mus., Coggles, Witney OX8 6LA

DEVELOPING HERITAGE EDUCATION 4-6 Jan 84
Contact M. Dyer, Her. Ed. Trust, St Mary's
Coll, Strawberry Hill, Twickenham TW1 4SX

Croxteth Walled Garden

A CASE STUDY IN PRESERVATION AND PRESENTATION

Keith Chilton
Landscape Manager
Croxteth Country Park



The Garden's two acre site seen from the air (photo E.E. Jackson)

The Walled Garden is promoted as one of the three main visitor attractions at Croxteth Hall and Country Park, Liverpool. Formerly the country seat of the Earls of Sefton, the Park has been administered by the Environmental Conservation Division of Merseyside County Museums since 1975.

The seventies decade witnessed a surge of interest in visits to gardens open to the public. 'Garden history' was born, a movement inspired by the National Trust, Garden History Society, Royal Horticultural Society, private owners, local authorities and many others. It culminated in an excellent exhibition "The Garden", staged at the V & A in 1979.

The country house and estate set in landscaped gardens is a unique English establishment. Historically, the walled garden with its productive function of growing fruit, vegetables and flowers, has been a vital jigsaw piece in the whole model of supreme self sufficiency demonstrated by such

estates. It is important therefore to retain this integral element in the interpretation of the lifestyle and functioning of the estate.

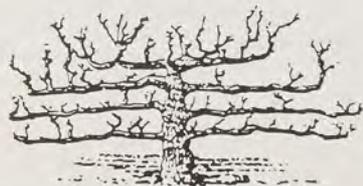
The days of the great kitchen gardens of the past may be gone, but fascination and nostalgia on the part of the public follow in the wake of their decline. At Croxteth the decision was made in 1978 to develop the Walled Garden as a major visitor facility with historic reinstatement. This option was preferred to those often followed elsewhere, namely to close the garden and run it on a private or semi-commercial level, or to redesign the garden for minimum labour input by grassing over, removing fruit trees etc.

The development choice at Croxteth was justified by a number of considerations, particularly the Garden's historic value, the scarcity of interpretive horticultural facilities in Merseyside, the educational opportunities, and the potential visitor

income in an area with a population of 2½ million within a 30km radius.

Research is important in arriving at a value judgment on the historic importance of a garden. The Garden History Society and National Trust were of considerable assistance with advice in our research into Croxteth's landscape development. It emerged clearly that although the formal gardens are pleasant with fine mature tree specimens, there are no particular collections of plants and no notable landscape architect of the past has been associated with their development. It is in fact the kitchen garden department which has been famous for past excellence and enjoyed regional notoriety for cropping both in the open and under glass.

The most valuable historic remnants in the Garden include a 150 foot long lean-to peach house containing peaches, nectarines and figs, and having two portico entrances to the Garden; a flue wall system with one wall retaining its original chimneys; hundred-year-old fruit trees in espalier,



goblet and cordon shapes; several greenhouses including a teak propagation house, ¾-span carnation house and melon-pit frame; and a mushroom house with slate beds supported by ornamental ironwork. All this is set in a historic framework with the Head Gardener's cottage and Bothy, making preservation and interpretation undoubtedly worthwhile.

However, the reinstatement programme had to present a viable option set against the dwindling financial resources of local government. By use of the philosophy embodied in the book "Preservation Pays" by Marcus Binney, it was argued that the extra resources of labour and materials could be part funded, at least, by admission charges and a sales policy. The Garden has the advantage from a visitor point of

view of close proximity to the Hall. It is open daily from Easter to the end of September. Visitors can pay a separate entrance charge to see the Garden (currently 30p for adults) or buy an inclusive ticket for all the facilities at Croxteth. A target level for viability of 50,000 Walled Garden visits per year was set; in 1982 the numbers went over 48,000 so are well on course.

In one of the compromises necessitated by the commercial approach, a sales area for gifts and pot plants as well as our own produce is now located in one portico of the peach house, acting also as entrance and exit point. During the week economical staffing requires only one sales assistant, but on Sundays and Bank Holidays two or three are needed, especially when the second portico is opened up to ease visitor flow.

In presenting the Garden there have inevitably been other compromises. Fortunately the vast majority of visitors are content to savour the atmosphere of the Edwardian 'heyday' world and tread in the bygone steps of the nobility without noticing these departures from the purist approach. Historically the outdoor vegetables would have occupied virtually all the middle areas of the Garden; to reduce labour we have a demonstration vegetable allotment of 300 square yards only, while the less demanding soft fruit, which gives a better financial return, occupies a quarter of an acre. Walled borders of the past were cropped with cut flowers, herbs, early salads and vegetables. Small areas are retained to demonstrate this function but the majority of the borders have been utilised for permanent plantings of less usual shrubs and herbaceous plants. A process of repair and replacement of existing greenhouses is being followed, with important help from MSC schemes, but sometimes the original cropping function has had to be modified. For example the ¾-span house, once used indulgently to produce carnations all the year round, is now a general plant display house.

Garden character is retained wherever possible; all the old fruit trees remain as aesthetic ornaments and a replacement policy is being pursued.

Samples of their fruit have been sent for several years to Wisley for identification; a list of varieties is to be produced for visitor interest. The firm of J.C. Allgrove has been helpful in supplying old varieties for replacement. Under the auspices of the Henry Doubleday Research Association there is also a section devoted to comparing the ancient 'disappearing' vegetable varieties with their modern counterparts.

Regrettably virtually no written garden records are available to assist interpretation except for a fascinating collection of daily weather records dating from 1881 to 1972. The Rangers have resurrected this past practice and have assembled recording instruments within a grassy area which serves as the newly born weather station. This is attractively set in a small herb garden. The Rangers have also taken over the maintenance of the Garden's beehives.

Public expectancy from a garden visit is to see masses of flowers. A good interpretation system in a productive garden is far more important therefore than in a purely decorative garden. A house style sympathetic to the surroundings is vital. An overlabelled or badly labelled garden is disastrous and can detract from the very thing the public has come to see.

Croxteth Walled Garden was at first open on a guided tours only basis.

Rangers keep up the tradition of weather-recording (photo N. Carson)



This classic example of a Lancashire Peach House, with entrance porticos was reinstated in 1977-78. Croxteth has enjoyed a fine reputation for fruit growing under glass. Peaches, nectarines, figs and grapes have all been specialist crops previously grown here and favoured by the south facing aspect of the greenhouse. Today we attempt to recreate a similar cropping programme.



Part of the introductory panel for the Peach House (photo E.E. Jackson)

An information booklet was published and is still on sale, though due for revision. We now have a free-flow system based on labels with an information colour code of dark green on cream, together with a direction colour code of white on green for route arrows, no entry etc. Information panels 18" x 24" canted back and mounted on low wooden box frames are sited at a dozen key points. They relate to major features of interest, e.g. the flue wall, fruit tree shapes, beekeeping, bedding plants etc. A brief text is accompanied by attractive illustrations or a diagram. We first tried resin encapsulated panels, but found that they faded and were easily chipped by garden machinery; replacements in stoved aluminium have just been installed. Individual plant labelling where required is dealt with by green Lebraset or Leteron on cream Darvic (with a coat of varnish to protect).

Croxteth has a strong commitment to education. The Walled Garden offers two acres of unlimited opportunity to use every aspect of horticulture as a teaching aid for environmental studies at all levels. A well qualified Ranger team is available to develop this potential. An imaginative activity book for primary children to use in the Garden has proved very popular and is one of a wide range of teachers' resource materials produced by Croxteth Visitor Services for the Park. Croxteth gained the Sandford Award for Heritage Education in 1981. Over 16,000 school-children used the Walled Garden in 1982; a gratifying feature remarked on

by teachers is the value of the educational experience for even quite young children. Attempts are being made at the present time to provide schoolroom facilities and encourage use by schools in the 'close season'; this would also have the economic advantage of extending the period of visitor use of the Garden.

Weekend horticultural demonstrations provided for the general public in 1980-81 have now become focussed into meetings of the new Croxteth Hall Garden Society. The group held its first annual Flower, Fruit and Vegetable Show in 1981. A Young Growers Club also flourishes on Saturdays, with recruitment from neighbourhood primary schools. A vegetable plot in the Garden is enthusiastically cultivated by the children. A group of active pensioners from the local community assists each year in soft fruit picking on a voluntary basis, and

there are flower arranging classes in the Hall.

Such activities generate interest, provide publicity, and make worthy use of the whole facility. For the general visitor the bustle of purposeful activity appears to enhance the experience - a dynamic rather than static state holds an intrigue.

Backed by the skill, commitment and enthusiasm of the gardening staff under the key figure of the Head Gardener, Croxteth Walled Garden is looking forward to another successful year in 1984, when the International Garden Festival comes to Liverpool. In spite of the financial struggles, the policy of reinstatement of the Edwardian Walled Garden - with a clear interpretive strategy implicit in each decision made - has been most worthwhile, and has brought satisfaction, pleasure and cultural benefits to many thousands of visitors.

Young Growers Club in action in Croxteth Walled Garden (photo A.J. Maddock)



The Sandford Award & Heritage Education

Martyn Dyer Acting Director
Heritage Education Trust

In 1977 the Sandford Award was established to foster the educational use of historic properties by schools. One aim of the Award is to encourage owners and other agents responsible for administering such properties to develop educational services and facilities. The other and equally important aim is to ensure that such services and facilities are of a high standard and administered in such a way as to enable the visiting school to regard such visiting as a genuine part of its curriculum. Criteria have been devised which a property must meet before it can win the Sandford Award. Among other things it must be able to show evidence of liaison between itself and the school before the visit and of follow-up work after the visit has taken place. There must also be evidence of involvement with L.E.A.'s.

In its early years the Sandford Award was administered by the Council for Environmental Education. Then in 1982 The Heritage Education Trust (H.E.T.) was established with a base at St. Mary's College, Strawberry Hill, and will be responsible for the future administration of the Award, which it has taken over from the Council for Environmental Education. In addition, H.E.T. will be seeking ways and means of promoting the Award among owners of properties to encourage educational provision among more and more houses and historic properties. From 1983 the Award is open to Cathedrals and Winchester has been the first to apply. Hand in hand with the promotion of the Award among properties goes the task of spreading news of it among schools, encouraging communication between the world of ownership



St Mary's
College
Strawberry Hill

THE
HERITAGE
EDUCATION
TRUST

and the world of education, and forging links with other bodies interested in the educational use and interpretation of the environment and the heritage.

The prospects for development in the field of education and the heritage are enormous and very exciting. The historic house alone constitutes a unique and largely unexploited national educational resource. A small but influential and growing group of private owners recognises this. So does The National Trust and so does the Department of the Environment. The foundations are there and H.E.T.'s main aim is to encourage careful building on them. The main constraints at the moment are financial and fund raising is the top priority for the Trustees. Meanwhile, within its limited resources, the Heritage Education Trust will promote the aims outlined above and its next major event is a short residential course entitled 'Developing Heritage Education' to be held at St. Mary's College from 4th to 6th January 1984. Among those who have agreed to take part are Lord Briggs, Provost of Worcester College, Oxford; John Tomlinson, Director of Education, Chester, and Kent Opera. Further details may be had by sending a stamped and addressed envelope to: A.M.Dyer, Acting Director, Heritage Education Trust, St. Mary's College, Strawberry Hill, TW1 4SX.

Austin Nature Center, Texas

Ruth Tillyard



Involvement is the name of the game.

I was going to submit an article about the exciting new Visitor Centre in Austin, Texas. But the main point to emerge as I started writing is that we in Britain can still learn much from the American approach to interpretation, of which the Austin Nature Center is an example. Briefly, I think that the main differences in interpretive provision (the reasons for which needn't concern us here), are that we are more sophisticated with exhibitions, publications, and perhaps surprisingly souvenirs and

marketing, whereas Americans have developed participatory activities and the volunteer sector much further. The following is a short description of the development of natural environment interpretation in Austin with many examples of programs in order to give a good idea of their breadth.

Austin, population 300,000, is one of the handful of sunbelt cities that has a growth rate comparable to that of Britain's nineteenth-century industrial cities. There are a few State Parks nearby, but otherwise all facilities for outdoor recreation are provided at the local level. A small, older-style Visitor Centre already exists (called the Natural Science Center), built to house a series of "Interpretive Programs", i.e. participatory activities, which has also expanded to the "Pioneer Farm" (a reconstructed nineteenth-century farm) and in the last few months to the Austin Nature Center. A fresh set of programs is published three times a year, with of course more emphasis on outdoor programs in spring and summer.

The Programs

The programs at the Natural Science Center and the Austin Nature Center are divided into four groups. Youth, age 1½ to 13 has 18 programs; examples are (for 1½ to 2½) "Babies and Beasties -- introduce your baby to our beasties.

Your child will explore furs, feathers, skins and the beasts that wear them", (for 3 to 5) "Story Hour -- Nature stories come alive through the use of puppets, animals and environmental recordings", (for 6 to 12) "Holiday Nature Camp -- spend a day or two with the nature center gang! Adventure and excitement await you! Hiking, wildlife, crafts and much more will fill your days". Young Adults, age 13 to 18 has 7 programs, for example "Austin Wilderness Institute -- continues its outdoor adventures. This spring the group forms again and heads out into the wild places of Central Texas for backpacking, rock climbing and canoeing. Go for it! You are worth it!" Families, all ages, has 23 programs, such as: "Birds of Prey -- come meet some of our resident hawks and owls and learn of the important

role they play in nature's balance", "San Antonio Zoo Trip -- travel to the Alamo city to learn of all the fascinating native and exotic wildlife", "Barton Creek Bug Hike -- visit one of Austin's best bug hunting locations to learn about these small interesting creatures and how to identify them". Adults have 31 programs, and examples of these are: "Native Basketry -- learn one of the oldest art forms. A variety of techniques and fibres will be utilized", "Austin Butterflies -- investigate the lives of Austin's butterflies and their classification, plant relationships, behaviour, geographical distribution and much more", "Guadalupe River Canoe Trip", "Your guide to environmental eating -- how to plan your meals to combat the effect of pollution and toxic chemicals". The Pioneer Farm has a total of 12 programs this spring.

I don't propose to list the advantages of activities that involve people, but it is sufficient to say that the experience can be far more exciting and potentially beneficial than passive participation in, for example, an exhibition. Another good point illustrated by this series, is that participatory activities can be flexible enough to be geared specifically towards different needs and levels of interest. The major disadvantage is that they have to be pre-booked and paid for and the published list is not generally available outside the rather inaccessible Centres. This effectively rules out participation by casual visitors, anyone who does not already have some awareness of the scheme, or those who cannot afford to pay. And really these are the people who could benefit the most. Also, Austin has a large minority of Spanish speakers and there is no provision for them.

Reverse Provision

Several years ago, it became apparent that the emphasis on programs had some limitations and would also outgrow the Natural Science Center. The Austin Nature Center was planned to provide more programs, and to broaden the range of interpretive services available. A site was found, in a derelict quarry at the edge of the largest city park. Thus the initial concept is

fundamentally different from Visitor Centres in the U.K. As far as I know, every one of these that interprets Natural History has been built at a site considered to have a particular significance. But Austin Nature Center has been built because of a belief that the people of Austin should have a center where Natural History is interpreted. The concept is therefore closer to that of British urban study centres that have been established to interpret the urban environment for a whole area and not a specific site. This situation of programs first, centre later is not typical of the U.S. The reasons that it has happened "backwards" in Austin are that management is extremely imaginative, and the city is so young that there were no old traditions to build on, no 50's Visitor Centre dictating the direction of expansion.

Staffing and Volunteers

The Austin Nature Center is now the HQ for all the interpretive programs for Austin, and there is room for growth. With the establishment of the Centre, more staff have been recruited, up to the present total of 26. Three of these form an "Outreach Section", a feature common to many museums in America, whose aim is to promote the programs and to take them out to the people via, for example, community centres, shopping malls and schools. Another is a volunteer co-ordinator, and the organisation depends on its volunteers for such things as office help, manning the Nature Store, looking after the resident animals, and leading some of the Programs too. Austin may be exceptional in the size of the demand for leisure activities many would call work. Volunteers are trained where appropriate. In addition there exists the Austin Natural Science Association, an organisation of 600 people which provides guidance by means of advisory committees, with sub-committees such as building projects, landscape projects and exhibit projects. It is not forgotten what a useful political weapon people with a committed interest can be! It also raises funds, with special events, some for the members and two for the public, one of these attracting 35,000 visitors in two days. The Association

also has a Guild of 400 members (overlap is estimated to be only 20%). Many organisations in the US have ladies' groups in which the social element is important, but of course they also do much valuable work, in this case staffing most of the programs for schools. The total numbers participating in programs for 1982 was 96,000, 26% of them in school groups.

The Interpretive Plan

An interpretive plan has been produced by Hanna, Silvey and Associates. It identifies two types of visitors: program users and spontaneous (but still paying) visitors, the latter being catered for the first time. Thus, the twin objectives will be to "provide program leaders with program space and subject matter to present to program participants", and to provide spontaneous visitors with "information about programs ... that promote enjoyment of the Austin environment in such a way that their personal investment in the preservation of the environment will be increased". The overall theme will be The Austin Environment: What is it? How does it work? How does it inter-relate? How do I relate to it? How can I best continually enjoy it? (Note that this means the natural environment only -- illustrating a dichotomy found both sides of the Atlantic). The plan provides for program use space which includes display, classroom, storage and projection space, plus reception and small sales areas. This has already been constructed. The plan also proposes a large exhibition, and use of the land round the Visitor Centre for Interpretation, in three decreasingly intensive zones with outdoor exhibits, trails, activity areas and amphitheatres.

Finally, an Interpretive Notebook, "Austin is", made up of separate, purchaseable sheets and a binder is suggested.

Several firms of consultants are shortly to start work on the details of the

SCULPTURE IN A PARK

The largest sculpture park in Britain opened in June at Margam Country Park in West Glamorgan. Credit for this enterprise must go to the Welsh

second phase. However, they have been briefed not to be constrained by the existing Interpretive Plan (which has fulfilled its primary purpose of getting financial support), but to consider all possible new media and ideas for achieving the above objective in accordance with the stated guidelines. (involvement, quality etc.). When the whole project has been completed, Austin should have a facility that provides the community with a balance between the type of interpretation to which we haven't yet paid enough attention, and that to which we may have devoted a disproportionate amount of our energies in the past.

This youngster is not quite sure that so-called "hands-on" experience is what she wants.



Sculpture Trust for assembling the 65 items, and to the County, the Welsh Arts Council and the Wales Tourist Board for supporting the venture. A whole new theme for Margam Director Terry Stevens to interpret perhaps?

Introspection

Michael Glen, SIBH Chairman

Two years ago, under the guidance of Graham Taylor, the committee of SIBH drew up a five-year strategy entitled 'New Directions for the Society.' It is appropriate to review progress and perhaps do a little chivvyng.

We are hopeful about receiving charitable status which was envisaged in the new constitution drawn up in 1981. Such things take time, but the various hurdles have, we think, been overcome. In addition, we shall shortly be able to announce that subscriptions will be formally accepted as tax-deductible - some lucky members have been getting this benefit already, by listing SIBH on their tax returns.

But on a much broader front, the Society is also achieving some of the goals set for it by 'New Directions.' Much greater contact with other organisations now exists and joint meetings have been held successfully on a number of occasions. More important in some ways, we still have to get through to those groups for whom 'interpretation' is still largely an unknown factor. In the last few weeks, however, the Society has been asked to play a part in the 1984 Festival of Architecture being run by the RIBA. This is new territory and we must make the most of it.

Status is important to most of us, would we admit it. And to societies as well. The Carnegie UK Trust, which has given us wholehearted support from the beginning, has paid us a considerable compliment by asking if we will take part in their celebrations to mark the 150th anniversary of Andrew Carnegie's birth by arranging a meeting in Dunfermline in 1985. We plan, therefore, to hold our tenth AGM (itself a mini-milestone) in Scotland

and to make it, if possible, an international affair. Our gospel is worth spreading beyond our shores now. (As this is written, I hear of a possible 'rival' international event to be held that year in Canada!)

Our newsletter continues to provide a mix of news and views, and is to undergo a facelift after eight years more or less unchanged. While its editors are always receiving suggestions for improvement, it seems that broadly speaking 'Interpretation' meets the needs of members. To make it a professional journal with major articles, advertising and a wide circulation is a step too big to take yet. However, the first of our occasional papers - on 'Evaluating Interpretation' - was published after the London meeting in 1981, and is widely requested. We shall publish further papers when appropriate subjects are discussed.

Perhaps most successful of all in the last couple of years has been the events programme set up by Terry Robinson. The varied pattern of regional and national gatherings on a variety of site or subject based topics has been a key element in bringing the Society's aims to a wider audience. In particular, the establishment of meetings regionally has given scope to members throughout the country to do their bit for the Society - and for interpretation.

But we still must be vigilant in bringing our wares and our beliefs to a broader audience. We must still seek new members - for many members draw inspiration from the Society for a year or two and then move on. New blood is also vital if we are not to become self-satisfied - a danger constantly inherent in this report!

Our financial strength lies in building up and maintaining our membership. The Carnegie Trust's invaluable aid will last only another two years or so. After that we must show that we are capable of independent life. From the good heart we sense amongst our members at present, I am confident we can go forth and multiply.

Portsmouth Conference Report

Janet Cornish, Prince of Wales Committee



naval encounter - the SIBH Committee takes to the water (photo P. Riley)

Setting the Scene

Portsmouth is a confusing place - finding one's way to Old Portsmouth and the Camber inlet to board a boat was the first test of ingenuity for delegates to the Society's conference in Portsmouth on April 8th-10th. Everyone was eager to explore and understand the City's importance as a premier naval base and fortress.

A boat trip around the fortifications and Portsmouth Harbour on Friday afternoon was a fitting start to an exploration of the City's important history. Portsmouth Guides' chairman Mary Verrier provided a detailed and interesting commentary, although she had difficulty in competing with the boat's engine. The boat company have sole franchise on boat trips around the harbour but charges are surprisingly modest.

Arriving at the Dockyard by the Kings

Stairs (a privilege not extended to Royal Navy ratings or most visitors) meant that it was difficult for us to appreciate the visitor management problems caused at the main entrance to the Dockyard in particular by the almost total absence of car parking for visitors! Despite this over 400,000 visitors annually find their way to HMS Victory, mainly arriving on foot or dropped off by coaches.

Public access in the Dockyard is restricted to the dry dock which houses HMS Victory and the Mary Rose alongside and the Royal Navy Museum - although how many Countries would let visitors even this far into a major naval base? Many of the fine Georgian buildings cannot be seen by the public, neither is there any attempt to interpret the dockyard itself and how it has functioned over the centuries, although visitors must be aware that they are very much in a working environment.

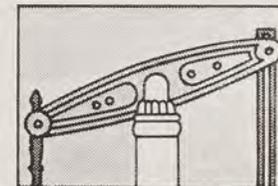
The Royal Naval Museum starts off with a collection of Nelson and Trafalgar relics and memorabilia. The main highlight in this part of the display is a beautifully painted panorama of the Battle of Trafalgar and a sound commentary on the battle.

Two newer and more interesting exhibitions deal with the Victorian Navy in the transition from sail to steam entitled 'the end of the Sailing Navy' and the Modern Navy including ship models and a full-size mock up of a frigate's operations room for those who are fascinated by the technology of modern warfare.

HMS Victory is still a commissioned Royal Naval Ship, so visitors are welcomed on board as guests of the Royal Navy and there is no entrance fee to pay, (which came as a surprise to us and also apparently to many visitors) Visiting the Victory at any time of year almost always involved a long wait - but mindful of the comfort of their guests the Navy provides benches. We, however, managed to skip all that and having been welcomed by the commanding officer were led in by a 'backdoor'. Visitors are taken around the ship by Royal Naval and Royal Marine personnel, who find themselves assigned to a two year tour of duty on the Victory. This was certainly something of a contrast for our Marine who on his return from the Falklands found himself showing visitors around. It understandably takes naval discipline and logistics to get all the visitors around this cramped space and to provide them with a personalised tour (groups are kept small) and an insight into life on board the ship as it was in Nelson's day through the eyes of a modern sailor. An interesting approach is taken to the training of the guides. They are given a potted history of the ship to learn and must be word perfect to pass out. This certainly does not necessarily create uniformity: our marine had added many embellishments to his story (he explained that this was an antidote to boredom). Asked how the public reacted to being shown around by amateur guides the commanding officer confided that he took no notice of complaints. After all, visitors were guests of the Royal Navy and guests don't complain!

The Mary Rose, still nestling in her protective cradle in the adjacent dry dock, was also attracting a good deal of attention. A caravan houses a small display about the ship and explained that some of the artefacts are to be seen at Southsea Castle. Staff and visitors will no doubt be glad to leave these cramped conditions when the Trust's visitor centre opens next year, as it now looks likely to, in one of the redundant boat houses in the dockyard.

Our exploration of Portsmouth then continued on Saturday afternoon with visits first of all to the Victorian suburb of Eastney and Eastney Barracks which houses part of Portsmouth's huge garrison - in this case, the Royal Marines. Only part of the barracks is still in use. Some of the rest is in the process of demolition, but the officers' mess has been converted into a museum portraying the story of the marines. Set in the highly ornate Victorian interior of the mess, the display tends to detract from the architecture of the rooms. Although much of the material is displayed in quite a lively way it was undoubtedly too much and too cramped, although obviously a Mecca for those interested in military history or having some connection with the Royal Marines.

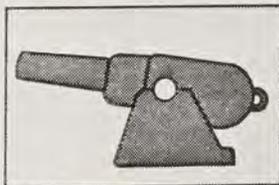


From there we took a look at Eastney Pumping Station with its two Poulton and Watt beam engines and pumps in working order. Portsmouth City Museum have done a splendid job of renovation but more effort might have been made to explain what they would have been pumping. In fact it was sewage!

Our next destination was Fort Widley, one of the ring of forts round the city known as "Palmerston's Folly". To get there we passed through more of Portsmouth's Victorian working class suburbs and then off Portsea Island. We passed the Hilsea Lines - part of

the town's Northern defences in the 18th Century, now open space, and finally climbed up on to Portsmouth Hill. With Portsmouth and its harbour and the Solent in front of us much of what we had seen and heard began to fall into place!

Fort Widley is owned by the City Museums Department, who are



carrying out much restoration work. At the moment visitors are only taken around on guided tours. Built in the 1860's to counter the threat to Portsmouth of a French army landing on the Channel coast and attacking the city from the north, it has a fascinating labyrinth of underground tunnels, gun emplacements and mortar batteries. Although in Palmerston's day it was never actually needed, a use was found for it during the second World War for soldiers waiting to embark for the 'D' Day landings. The Museums Department have plans to develop an exhibition on this theme.

Our final visit on Saturday afternoon was to Cumberland House Natural Science Museum and Aquarium, again run by the City Museum Service. Reactions to the museum were mixed - the displays were lively and they did endeavour to concentrate on interpreting the geology and natural history of the Portsmouth area. However it was undoubtedly again too cramped and although the museum staff claimed the exhibitions were particularly aimed at school children, the problems of controlling class loads of children looked daunting. We also learnt something of the hazards of looking after an aquarium during our visit when the pike was found to have 'jumped' his tank and expired on the floor behind the screen!

Our final treat was a reception at Southsea Castle as guests of the City Council, where we were able to admire more of their restoration work, listen to a recital from Portsmouth singers

and finally see some of the finds from the Mary Rose.

Defence of the Realm

Gill Binks started the Saturday morning session by explaining the background to and the main conclusions of the DART report titled Defence of the Realm, published 4 years ago but now helpfully reprinted by CEI.

One of the most important aims of the exercise was to get those people and organisations in Portsmouth who were concerned with individual sites or museums to see themselves as part of a much bigger story, far beyond what they were doing at any particular site. They were asked to consider how they might all work together to present the overall story of Portsmouth and Portsmouth's role in the defence of the British Isles.

The study therefore spent a great deal of time researching and working out the theme to show the significance of Portsmouth's heritage. It catalogued the vast array of historic resources in and around the city, through which this important story could be interpreted.

The key elements in the interpretive strategy developed in the report were that

1. No one site would tell the whole of this complex story, but there was a need for a central visitor facility to present an introduction to the overall theme of Defence of the Realm and to show visitors how they could make the most of their visit to Portsmouth.
2. Because of the dispersed nature of the various sites in and around the city and as far away as the Isle of Wight there was a need for the development of 'access systems' to help visitors get from one site to the next. These might include trails for motorists and pedestrians, and interpretive information on the various modes of transport, including the ferries.
3. Individual museums and heritage sites should develop their interpretive facilities and services in a lively way to contribute towards the overall theme.

The remainder of Saturday morning was taken up by two interesting and frank

assessments of the future of the City's heritage:

The view from the City Council

Councillor Marshall, Leader of Portsmouth City Council spoke on the Council's commitment to developing the City's heritage. In his view, until recently this had never quite mattered enough to Portsmouth. Up until the 1970's the City had Southsea as its main tourist attraction and promoted the "bucket and spade" image in a rather half hearted way. The City was now managing quite well to diversify its economy and becoming less dependent on the dockyard. But there was little attempt to actively promote or exploit the City's rich maritime and military history and certainly no coordinated policy for the development of the heritage.

Fortunately however the Council did have the foresight to acquire certain key historical buildings and features such as Southsea Castle. The conservation of other parts of the



Figurehead from HMS Trafalgar in Portsmouth Dockyard (photo M. Glen)

fortifications began and the City Museum Service was set up. Also, perhaps most significantly, a coordinating committee was formed between the City and the Service Museums.

However, despite the weight of the Drew Report, the setting up of the Portsmouth and Gosport Heritage Advisory Committee and the publishing of the DART report, it was often a difficult task, (even with the leader of the Council as a strong proponent), to persuade other councillors and the City's rate payers to spend money on developing the City's heritage.

In many ways John Knott's Defence White Paper seems to have had a more significant effect. The prospect of job losses at the Dockyard is forcing the City to look for further diversifications of the local economy and the City Council are now counting more strongly on tourism development to help.

Councillor Marshall considered that the infrastructure for tourism development had already been much improved by motorway links, new hotel developments, the moving of the Isle of Wight Ferry and the reconstruction of the Seafront. But much remained to be done. Visitor car parking for the Dockyard was a major problem and a development programme was needed for the fortifications. There was years of work and millions of pounds still to be spent and there was still a need to counteract the lack of understanding of heritage provision among local councillors and to convince the people of Portsmouth that it was vital to the City's economy to spend money on heritage projects.

In Councillor Marshall's view by the end of the century Portsmouth can and must have projected itself into the foremost maritime and military heritage centre in Europe. A Canterbury or Stratford of the sea and services was what he had in mind.

The Role of the Royal Navy and the Dockyard

Rear Admiral Tippet, Flag Officer Portsmouth, began his contribution by explaining the affection in which Portsmouth was held, it was very much regarded as 'the home' of the Royal

Navy. There were several major reasons why the Royal Navy should be concerned with the future of Portsmouth's heritage and its development:

- the Royal Navy was itself proud of its heritage and traditions, though some would claim that it was unduly consumed with a concern for the past and its traditions.

- there was a genuine common interest in each other's welfare between the city and the Navy, particularly at a time of substantial changes in the Royal Navy.

The Naval Base itself was steeped in history, particularly in the South West corner of the Dockyard which was designated as a Conservation Area in 1976 for its fine Georgian buildings. 27 buildings are scheduled Ancient Monuments and one (St. Ann's Church) is listed.

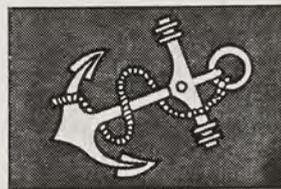
At the same time it is very much a busy working environment. The Dockyard is an industrial concern, the size of Vauxhall Motors, providing repair and maintenance facilities, victualling services for the Royal Navy and port services for both the Navy and Merchant shipping. Many of the historic buildings were still very much in active use.

Although the effects of the 1981 Defence White Paper are reducing the Dockyard workforce considerably the number of ships and sailors will stay more or less the same. Although the Dockyard will concentrate on servicing and repair and not refitting it will remain very much alive as a naval base.

However, a small but significant number of the historic buildings and dockyards in the South West corner will most likely no longer be needed operationally. This would open up exciting possibilities for the development of a major heritage centre interpreting the history of the Royal Navy. The Mary Rose was now almost certain to remain in the Dockyard alongside HMS Victory and the Mary Rose Trust were interested in opening an exhibition and visitor centre in two of the boathouses in a year's time. HMS Warrior (1860) was being restored by the Preservation Trust with the Landmark Trust and was

going to come to Portsmouth. Its new berth would be built alongside the Dockyard. The Foudroyant, the oldest ship afloat in Portsmouth, (a youth training vessel currently anchored in the harbour) might also find its way into the Dockyard. The Royal Naval Museum also had ideas for expansion - particularly to deal with the period between 1905 and the present day.

The various trusts and organisations concerned would now be working together to develop a common plan for the development of a major maritime heritage centre in the Dockyard. A great deal still needed to be resolved but the various organisations concerned agreed that there was a great deal to be gained from finding a common home in the Dockyard, sharing visitor facilities and above all continuing to interpret the rich history of the Navy and Portsmouth in the defence of the realm.



Developing a Strategy for interpretation and visitor reception

The final session on Sunday morning was introduced by Richard Harrison, Director of the Mary Rose Trust. Richard was pleased that SIBH had been able to come to Portsmouth at this particular time. There were exciting prospects for drawing together and presenting the various strands of the city's heritage but at the same time many issues still needed to be resolved. He welcomed the opportunity to examine the situation with other SIBH members.

In his view there was still a great deal to do to respond to the challenge of the Defence of the Realm Report and to reach its goals. There was undoubtedly a wealth of resources but there were still considerable difficulties in bringing them together. Since the report had been published a number of things had happened to pave

the way but there were few tangible results on the ground:

- There were still a number of gaps to be filled in the interpretive story where little progress had been made in conserving sites or opening them to the public. These included several DoE properties and the Blockmills in the Dockyard built by Brunel and reputed to be the 'first factory'. The running parts of the original machinery were still intact but a substantial sum would be required for restoration.

- It was now the accepted view among the organisations and individuals concerned with the various museums and heritage sites that the best way forward was through collaboration and joint marketing, publicity and promotion.

- There was also acceptance of the idea of joint interpretive facilities. But who pays? Substantial funding would be required to do justice to the interpretive story. There was still undoubtedly a need for a central visitor facility to set the scene and introduce Portsmouth's complex story as the DART report recommended.

In the dockyard there was a need for a centre which presented the story of the naval base although in the short term the Mary Rose Trust would provide some common information in number 5 boathouse.

- There was also a question mark over the 'gang of five' heritage organisations who were now likely to find a home in the Dockyard and whether this arrangement can be financially viable. Two Feasibility studies were now being set up to examine this in detail.

- Substantial problems still remained to be resolved over the provision of visitor services, the management of visitors and traffic. At the moment there were only 30 car parking spaces available for the 400,000 visitors to the Victory. A visitor survey showed 80% of visitors came by public transport.

Discussion

With Michael Glen as chairman, Richard Harrison was joined by Tony Haworth Director of Portsmouth Museums; Major Tony Brown, Director of the Royal Marines Museum; Captain John Mellis



Royal Marines Museum (photo M. Glen)

Research Director of HMS Warrior (1860); Mrs Rosemary Cochrane of the submarine museum; Mary Verrier, Chairman of Portsmouth Guides; Colin Bonsey Hampshire County Council Recreation Officer and Gill Binks of CEI.

The discussion began by looking at the implications for visitor management of developing a major maritime heritage centre. Bill Lanning suggested that the city's geography posed particular problems for getting 2 or 3 million people a year into its South West corner. Colin Bonsey backed up this view that the visitor management implications for the city and the region as a whole needed to be carefully investigated.

Others were concerned that if increasing numbers of visitors and tourists were to be attracted, the City might not be able to cope with the demand for hotel and other accommodation and facilities.

Tony Haworth commented that up until now the hotel association had not been very active but they were beginning for instance to provide "Short break holidays". The main problem was too many boarding houses and not enough hotels. Richard Harrison added that there were currently about 7,000 bed spaces in Portsmouth but the major hotel chains were still building in the area. The general feeling was that it was vital for the heritage and museum

interests to work more closely with those concerned with accommodation and visitor amenities in the hotel association and the chamber of trade.

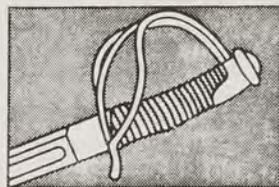
Considering the Dockyard area, there was general agreement that very careful thought had to be given to the reception of visitors, particularly as circulation space was limited. John Mells suggested that some of the reception facilities might be on board ship. Warrior would be a very significant landmark and there would be a considerable space on board but this was an idea which had not really been thought through in detail at this stage. Richard Harrison added that there was also a great deal of space in the three boathouses which would be surplus to the Dockyard's requirements but substantial sums of money would be needed to make use of all the 70,000 square feet on 5 floors which might be available. The question of the financial viability of a major heritage centre was touched on next. Although very impressive numbers of visitors came to see HMS Victory Colin Bonsey wondered what the effect would be if a charge was made. It might be dangerous to base assumptions on visitor numbers coming to a free attraction. Richard Harrison agreed that it was crucial to make realistic predictions and the new feasibility study would look at this in depth.

Going on to the efforts to interpret the Portsmouth story, Geoffrey Stansfield commented that the experience of this weekend had confirmed for him the need for a central visitor centre. He suggested that the quality of the visitors' experience would undoubtedly depend on their initial orientation and their acquisition of an outline of the story to carry with them as they visited the various sites. He wondered whether an introductory A-V presentation of some kind would be the way to do it. Tony Haworth commented that the city museums were indeed already looking at this. Possible sites on the Hard were being examined for a commercially run AV auditorium. This was currently at the planning stage.

Tony Fyson was concerned about the treatment of the main theme. The interpretation of the history of military and naval endeavour rarely

addresses itself to the less acceptable face of warfare. There was little examination of why war happens and of political motivations.

Tony Brown agreed that military museums were sometimes criticised for indulging in the 'glorification of War'. But at the Royal Marines Museum they had attempted to take a balanced view - dealing not only with the achievements



of war but also exploring the conditions endured by the combatants. One of their problems was lack of space to deal with this as fully as they would like. Their main aim was to show the complete history of the marines in a naval and a military sense.

Rosemary Cochrane added that at the Submarine Museum they attempted to deal with the human aspects as much as with the submarines themselves.

Bill Lanning thought that another very important gap was any attempt to deal with the social impact of the Dockyard and the Naval presence on the town and the town/navy relationships.

Tony Haworth admitted that the City Museum had not really dealt with this as yet, and there was a great deal of material to illustrate the social impact on the town of being the biggest fortress in Britain geared almost entirely to sustaining a naval dockyard. But he hoped that they would soon be able to put this right.

Finally Terry Robinson wondered whether SIBH should not consider the implications for a national interpretive strategy of a major maritime heritage centre in Portsmouth. Chatham Dockyard had a very fine array of buildings and was closing entirely and might lay claim to developing as a similar centre.

There was general admiration, however,

for the extent to which the organisations, institutions and individuals concerned with promoting and preserving Portsmouth's heritage appeared to be working together towards a common goal. There was a feeling that if Portsmouth, with over 400,000 visitors visiting HMS Victory and a massive throughput of holiday makers and other travellers using the Isle of Wight and Channel Ferries, could not capitalise on interpreting its rich heritage, then there

was little hope for others less well endowed.

Hazel and Richard Harrison are to be warmly thanked for their impeccable organisation and a stimulating and interesting weekend.

The line illustrations are some of the identification symbols used on Portsmouth Museums' publicity material to denote key features of each site.

Tourism and the Government

Frank Cotterill

On 19th January, 1976, Andrew Faulds M.P., sometime Opposition spokesman for the arts, published in *The Times* an article entitled 'The ancient assets that may be our salvation'. This was reprinted in the third issue of 'Interpretation' (spring 1976) under the heading 'Faulds unfolds his "fantasy" for future'. It sought to expose the fallacy that Britain will remain an industrial power relying on North Sea Oil, and to advocate the enhancement of our heritage, which already attracts many millions of visitors. It drew attention to current neglect of that heritage - the very asset which may become our livelihood in a post-industrial society with a greatly expanded tourist economy. The conclusion was that 'we must be farseeing enough to accept that our future may be some such fantasy - a sort of Switzerland with monuments in place of mountains'.

Even if not everyone will go along with the 'greener' political implications of Faulds' 'fantasy', it should be accepted that he makes a good case for a more thorough and imaginative use of our heritage. Seven years on, what are the prospects for serious attention being given to his thesis? It is too early to say yet how effective the Heritage Commission will

be in this field, but meanwhile we have a statement from the government that at least purports to be encouraging. This is a press notice from the Department of Trade dated 16th March 1983 and headed 'Improved Arrangements for the Development of Tourism'.

The notice starts off with the statement that new arrangements for the development of tourism in Britain reflect a substantial change in priorities and a redeployment of resources, 'underlying the increasing awareness of tourism's vital role in Britain's economic future'. However, hopes raised by this promising beginning soon begin to fade. Following a report by consultants, it has been found possible to make 'significant reductions' in the published grants-in-aid to the British Tourist Authority and the English Tourist Board, although the total sum available for support to tourism in the coming financial year 'should be maintained at the level shown in the Estimates'. There follow ominous references to 'cutting out areas of waste, non-priority activities, over-manning' etc., although there is to be re-direction of resources towards the promotion of tourism. In accordance with this, the BTA is to increase the proportion of money spent on promoting Great Britain abroad and to cut the amount of time, energy and money which it spends within Great Britain, often duplicating work claimed as being proper to other organisations or 'the trade'. This may sound logical enough, but deplorably it includes closing the BTA Information Centre in St. James' Street - which last year dealt with 163,000 enquiries and

which I personally have found a most helpful facility. One is hardly reassured by an invitation to the BTA to propose an additional programme of Overseas promotions, for which provision of up to one million in 1983/4 is intended (generosity indeed!) 'making a total grant-in-aid of sixteen and a half million' (compare that with the money poured into the motorcar industry, which earns us far less than tourism does).

Meanwhile the ETB also has to redeploy resources - and this includes withdrawing financial support from all point-of-entry Information Centres, except the one at Victoria Station in London. Promised exploration of 'alternative financial arrangements' for all the other centres and an increase in subvention to the Regional Tourist Boards in England during 1983/4 leave one wondering what, for instance, will be the effect on some of the Centres of current pressure on local authorities to cut spending. Perhaps the most disturbing aspect of the proposals here is the cavalier assumption that because many tourists at present arrive in London (actually described as this country's 'single most important tourist destination - a magnet for attracting tourists to the UK who, after visiting London, spread out to other parts of the country') this is the only option worth considering. How far, one wonders, will the encouraged flow of visitors through Victoria benefit the promotion of the historical attractions of Portsmouth, which has its own Continental ferryport, or the remarkable initiatives made by Manchester in showing to the visitor its industrial and pre-industrial past - to name just two authorities which are bringing imagination and enterprise to the development of their heritage, and surely deserve all the help they can get for a local point-of-entry? Can it be doubted that one aim of a realistic national policy for tourism should be to take the pressure off London and to accustom overseas visitors to the idea that it is possible and indeed advantageous for them to arrive at other cities?

A final paragraph refers tantalisingly, without specifying, to 'far-reaching proposals' the Parliamentary Under-

Secretary of State in the Department of Trade has in mind for the development of tourism in Britain, to 'increasing awareness that tourism will play a vital part in Britain's economic future', and to 'new challenges' for our tourist institutions. It will be interesting to see what all this means in terms of hard facts during the lifetime of the new government. (Incidentally, there is no mention of the recommendation made in a report of the House of Commons Education, Science and Arts Select Committee last October for a Ministry of the Arts, Heritage and Tourism). Meanwhile, the press notice as it stands leaves one with the suspicion that the first question that was asked when the whole matter came under consideration was not 'here is an industry which already earns an annual ten-figure sum for the nation, how can we extend and improve it?', but simply, 'where can we make cuts?' - and that what is effectively envisaged is not a radical re-thinking of the whole business of tourism but merely a general acceptance of present patterns of activity and levels of financial provision, with modifications that are essentially minor.

It is unfortunate that the notice was only briefly reported in the press, for the issue is one that deserves full public attention. For SIBH it surely has particular significance, for interpretation of the heritage is pointless unless one can make people aware of its existence and get them to visit it - and, be it remembered, the marketing process must take full account not only of native visitors but also of visitors from overseas, very definitely including those who do not have English as a first language or do not have it at all. Nor is it enough to assume that the heritage simply exists and all we have to do to it is to apply interpretation to particular pieces of it here and there, for national policy adopted for it as a cultural, social and economic asset must include provision for research on it, for preservation and, where appropriate, for its recovery; while ultimately it is a limited resource, knowledge of it and public accessibility to it are constantly increasing and should be adequately supported.

It may be thought that because of crowding in particular places (London especially) our capacity to accommodate visitors, native or overseas, is already seriously stretched and that therefore tourism cannot earn much more for the nation than it does already. Study of the relevant figures, however, whether published or estimated from personal observation, does not support this and in fact reveals some remarkable inequalities.

Even in the heart of the capital this is apparent. It is accepted that our most famous architect is Christopher Wren, and his masterpiece does in fact attract two million visitors a year. Yet the other churches built by him in the City of London may be observed to be generally unvisited. This is a pity, for even after many grievous losses to Victorian developers and Hitler's bombers, they are still a fascinating group of buildings, illustrating the quality of Wren's genius when working on a comparatively modest scale. How many of the visitors to St. Paul's are given any encouragement or guidance to go on to discover the astonishing essay in Gothic at St. Mary Aldermary (fan-vaulting with saucer-domes!); or the cunningly planned interior of St. Stephen Walbrook; or, hidden away down a narrow turning off King William Street, the serene St. Mary Abchurch, with its fine array of original woodwork; or a number of others? The Tower of London is of course the other great tourist attraction; but of its visitors, again two million a year, how many see, a few hundred yards away, the finest surviving piece of the city wall of London (Roman below, medieval above)? Nearby is the find-spot of what must be, by many centuries, the oldest tombstone of a historical personage in the British Isles (maybe in Europe); it is marked, approximately, by a replica (the original is in the British Museum) - but how many find it, either by chance or intention?

In the country at large there are many variations in numbers of visitors to our great monuments. For beauty and instructiveness as ruins of Cistercian Abbeys, Tintern and Furness may be

accounted about equal; Tintern admittedly has the advantage of romantic situation, but would one expect it to get sixteen times as many visitors as Furness (116,900 against 7,100, in 1981)? Other such instances could be given, but what is perhaps the most extreme case of under-visiting may suffice. Longthorpe Tower near Peterborough, built about 1300, has wall-paintings in its principal room including subjects from the Bible and others such as the Seven Ages of Man and the Labours of the Months (what a marvellous opportunity here for interpretation of the medieval mind!) - quite obviously our finest series of medieval wall-paintings in a secular building. Visiting by vast crowds might be undesirable - but in 1981 the place had just 1400 visitors, which is surely ridiculous.

Naturally our tourist industry is largely in the hands of private enterprise tour operators and one may expect the present government to favour 'the trade'. The situation needs watching, however, for two reasons. Obviously tour operators concentrate on the well-established honey-pots and will tend to ignore the places where they cannot expect instant profits; which means that we get, for instance, the trivialisation of the heritage typified by coach trips from London which 'do' Oxford and Stratford-on-Avon on one day. The other reason is that the standard of guiding provided by operators can be deplorable (as reported by the ETB in 'English Cathedrals and Tourism,' e.g. unfortunate American visitors being told that English Cathedrals belong to the National Trust). Can one hope that in both these matters some measure of public control, and even public subsidy, will be considered?

We are now in the run-up to the BTA's promotion entitled Heritage '84. It has been said of this that it should not be used 'just as an excuse to rejig tired ideas from earlier years'. One may indeed hope that it will produce developments that will help to convince the Department of Trade that tourism deserves effective and increased support from central government.

Pendle's Bannister Room and Exhibitions

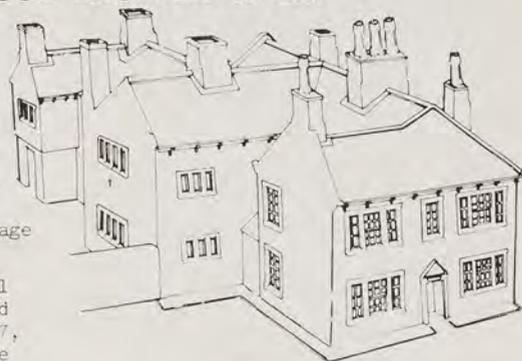
John Miller

The opening on May 14th of the Bannister Room and the Interpretive Exhibitions marks another stage in the development of the Pendle Heritage Centre.

Shortly after Pendle Borough Council leased Park Hill to the newly formed Pendle Heritage Centre Trust in 1977, it was felt that there should be one room in the house dedicated to the Bannister family, who built and lived at Park Hill from around 1450 to 1750. Sir Roger Bannister, a descendant of the family, gave the idea his enthusiastic support and through him several members of the Bannister family have contributed towards the cost of furnishings.

The implementation of the scheme had to be delayed until a Development Plan for Park Hill was agreed. Two years ago, after long negotiations and consultations, a Ten Year Plan was finalised. This Plan includes setting up some permanent exhibitions. One is about the interpretation of the history of Park Hill and a second exhibition will tell the story of the Pendle region from prehistoric times to the present. The first is now complete and the second phase will be installed during 1984/85. Although the exhibitions are permanent, flexibility has been introduced into the design so that additional items can be added from time to time and information updated.

The first phase has involved creating three new exhibition galleries on the ground floor. In the first room the visitor sees a reconstruction of a parlour as it would have appeared in the 17th century, with a chronological account of the Bannister family from their arrival in Pendle around 1450 to 1750, when they left Park Hill. The Trust has been able to purchase some of the 17th century furniture for this room, but has had to rely on Towneley Hall and the Bradford Art Galleries &



Museum for certain valuable items.

In the second room are maps, plans of the estate, inventories and other documents with an explanation of how Park Hill has evolved, together with details of the recent archaeological excavations on the site. In the third room is the story of the Park Hill after it was sold and divided into two houses in 1750, up to its present use as a Heritage Centre.

The Heritage Centre has received very generous grants from the Carnegie United Kingdom Charitable Trust and the Countryside Commission to meet the cost of the exhibition. The contractors have been the North Western Museums and Art Gallery Service. Research has been done by staff at the Pendle Heritage Centre employed by the Manpower Services Commission, led by Stanley Graham with assistance from Helen Challen, Edward Furgol, John Westwell and others. In addition over the past two years much research has been undertaken on a voluntary basis: an architectural survey of the building has been carried out by W J Smith, lecturer in the Extra-Mural department at Manchester University, and an archaeological excavation by Pendle Archaeological Group, led by D J A Taylor.

Guests at the opening also had a chance to see other work in progress at the Centre, including the new Meeting Room, and plans for the Toll House which has recently been purchased by the Trustees.

SIBH News

MEMBERSHIP

Since the beginning of the year the Society has gained over 30 new members and we would like to take this opportunity of welcoming them to the Society. They include our first member in the Channel Islands and a good section of designers, consultants, local authority officers, educationalists and one or two from voluntary organisations.

Our membership secretary has however, had to spend a good deal of time chasing people to pay their membership fees. Members are urged to help by paying promptly in the future!

It is interesting to note that our corporate membership is increasing considerably at the moment. Could you persuade your organisations to take out corporate membership of the Society?

Although the Society's membership is now healthier than it has been for a number of years the Committee is very aware of the need to encourage new people and organisations to join. New members are important to help the Society develop and to promote the course of interpretation.

In the autumn we will be launching a new membership drive. To this end Pat Riley and I are working on an updated prospectus and other publicity material and a new graphic 'look' for the Society. We are also intending to produce a small travelling exhibition explaining what the Society is about. If anyone has good black and white photographs of Society events, either of members or aspects of interpretation seen at Society Meetings, then I would like to hear from you. Alternatively if you have any ideas for opportunities when an exhibition could be used to promote the Society, then I would like to hear from you.

Michael Quinion

SOCIETY EVENTS

As you will see elsewhere in this issue the Society's AGM in Portsmouth proved to be a stimulating weekend and the Society's regional events are providing some interesting opportunities to see what is going on in various parts of the country.

The Society's national meeting in the

Autumn has now been fixed for 22nd October. We will be combining with the Group of Interpreters & Designers in Museums to look at scope for the use of "new technology" in interpretation and museum design, at a time when robots are appearing in Madame Tussauds new exhibition in Windsor! The meeting titled "Design - Interpretation - Computers", will be held in London at the Geological Museum.

At our last committee meeting the Committee concluded that the 1984 AGM should look at interpretation of a coastline subjected to considerable pressure from visitors, linking in with the Council for Europe's Water's Edge Campaign which will be focussing attention on Europe's coastline. We will therefore be going to Cornwall. Don't let the idea of the journey put you off. We hope to be able to negotiate some sort of travel deal with British Rail. The train journey itself is part of the interpretive experience. Looking ahead to 1985 the Carnegie UK Trust have sounded us out to see whether the Society would participate in a major conference in Scotland.

INTERPRETIVE AWARDS

The idea for an interpretive award scheme came from a 'viewpoint' written by Alan Machin in 'Interpretation' in the autumn of 1981. The Committee, having looked carefully at the feasibility of a scheme and having developed a workable format, is sure that promoting an award recognising outstanding interpretive practise would be of great benefit to the Society.

The Carnegie UK Trust have shown interest in the scheme and in June the Committee's Secretary, Ian Parkin, put a proposal to the Trust seeking support towards the administration of the award scheme hopefully in partnership with a commercial sponsor. The Committee hopes that if suitable backers can be found that the award scheme will start in 1984.

OTHER NEWS

An application for charitable status for the Society has recently been completed and is now with the Charity Commissioners.

The Committee is also investigating setting up a small MSC team to help with the Society's work.

News and Notes

SIBH CHAIRMAN

Michael H. Glen, our new Chairman, first met Interpretation when sent on Britain's first course for Interpretation trainers run by Don Aldridge in 1969. Then working for the Scottish Tourist Board, he left in 1972 to join the British Tourist Authority and represented BTA on the committee which formed SIBH in January 1975. Appointed Newsletter Editor at the first meeting that April - a job he did for four years - he has been an enthusiastic member since, despite working in the 'foreign' field of industrial training for five years. Now Head of Communications for the Countryside Commission, he is closer than ever to the pit-head - if not the coal-face - of Interpretation. Married with two teenage sons, he lives in a busy old industrial valley in Gloucestershire.

TATTON - 9 YEARS ON

The end of April saw something of a landmark in the development of interpretation in Britain, when the Countryside Commission and Cheshire County Council jointly sponsored a seminar to review implementation of the interpretive plan for Tatton Park. The plan was prepared in 1974 by the US National Park Service at the invitation of the Countryside Commission, as an example of interpretive planning methodology. Since then Cheshire have been implementing the plan - almost all of the major proposals in it now being complete.

The seminar was addressed by Peter Moore and Dolly Pile of Cheshire Countryside and Recreation Division, by Peter Neate Director of Tatton, and by Marc Sagan, brought over by the Commission from the U.S.N.P.S. As well as offering acute observations on how he saw things at Tatton, Marc held a number of lectures and discussions in other parts of the country which were much appreciated.

The seminar was also the launch vehicle for Dolly Pile's comprehensive study of Tatton's interpretation since 1974. Published jointly by the CC and the

CEI, the report has 122 A4 pages, over forty photos and numerous maps, diagrams and figures. It includes lengthy appendices of technical and information material as well as assessments by outside specialists in addition to Dolly herself.

It is AVAILABLE NOW at £3.50 plus £1 p+p from CEI, Dept., of Environmental Studies, Manchester Polytechnic, Manchester M15 6BH.

MOBILE WAX

As we suspected when publishing a picture of the Lancaster Cavalier robot in Interpretation number 22, the idea is catching on. Madame Tussauds have just spent £2 million to recreate Windsor and Eton Central Station as it was at the time of Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee celebrations in 1897. A specially built train carried royal guests from Paddington. An exhibition at the renovated station (disused for 30 years) is of the traditional static Tussaud's type - dignitaries greeted by serried ranks of soldiers, recreated engine, renovated royal carriage (discovered in use as a holiday home in Wales) and renovated royal waiting room. The real spectacle is provided by a 20 minute a-v show using 20 projectors and 1000 slides, plus seven robots. Victoria, Albert and others enact scenes from Victorian life, speaking and gesturing to the narration of the seated figure of actor Frank Finlay.

LEICESTER

Leicester has always been in the forefront of innovation in the environmental education and interpretation fields. Ever since Leicestershire Landscapes (Blond Educational 1970), it has been worth watching for the latest in a steady stream of ideas and materials. The pioneering Leicester Town Trail (BEE 16-17) and the Leicester Urban Studies Centre have been major landmarks (both largely the creation of SIBH member Keith Wheeler). It is now good to see the County Council coming up with a well produced 90 pence booklet called Leicestershire's Industrial Heritage. Anonymously illustrated with attractive line drawings, it is a guide to the main canal, railway and road sites, mines, factories etc that are worth seeing. A credit to the

County Planning Department (County Hall, Glenfield, Leicester LE3 8RJ - or phone Paul Anderson Leicester 8713 871313, ext 7527).

LOSEHILL TRAINING COURSES

Design and Graphics for Interpretation 21st-25th November 1983
£69.00 (actually £138 but 50% sponsored by the Countryside Commission)

A course which demonstrates and gives practice in the graphic techniques needed to produce good quality two-dimensional material on a limited budget.

Education in the Countryside 31st October - 4th November 1983
£69.00 (actually £138 but 50% sponsored by the Countryside Commission)

A practical course for those who wish to make closer contact with school groups. Advice will be given on how to liaise with local education authorities and teachers. How to assess the potential of an environment for teaching and how to approach the teaching of children of different ages and abilities.

Conservation Education in the Countryside

8th-9th November 1983 Cost £34.00

A two day seminar designed for those involved in conservation education at both the policy making and practical level eg. HMI's, LEA advisers, environmental education and countryside organisations and officers from field study/outdoor education centres.

The aim is to discuss policies, provision, demand and possible future directions for conservation education.

Peter Townsend, Principal, Peak National Park Centre, Losehill Hall, Castleton, Derbyshire (Telephone Hope Valley 20373)

BALH

The recently established British Association for Local History is running a residential weekend course in Malpas, Cheshire, on September 23rd-25th next on the subject of Village Records. Subjects covered include Parish, Ecclesiastical, Quarter Session and Estate records, Field Archaeology and practical workshop on original archive material of

Cheshire Record office.

It costs £35 for members and £38 for non-members. Write to BALH, 43 Bedford Square, London WC1B 3DP (Tel 01 636 4066)

URBAN DESIGN

Urban Design Forum is a 64 page typed A4 publication from the Joint Centre for Urban Design, Oxford Polytechnic (Headington, Oxford OX3 0BP). SIBH member Brian Goodey writes the editorial and contributes a fascinating report of his Council of Europe study of participation in urban design. Staff and students contribute a number of other valuable papers including reports on Newcastle's Quayside, re-use of old buildings, and built resources for local studies. Send £2 (plus 30p post - 50p overseas) to Philip Opher at the address above.

BTCV TRAINING

12 DRY STONE WALLING Piethorn, Lancashire - Week 24th-31st August
Volunteers: £12.60 Prof. staff £35

13 FOOTPATHS, DRAINAGE AND SURFACING Lake District - Weekend 2nd-4th September

14 BASIC CHAIN SAW Lancashire
Weekends 9th-11th September and 7th-9th October

15 POND ECOLOGY Wirral, Merseyside
Saturday 17th September

16 POND MANAGEMENT TECHNIQUES Lancashire - Weekend 23rd-25th September

17 TREE PLANTING I (DESIGNING A SCHEME) Preston Area Saturday 1st October

18 HEDGE LAYING Croxteth Country Park, Merseyside week 21st-28th October
Volunteers £12.60 Prof staff £35

19 TREE IDENTIFICATION Preston Area
Saturday 5th November

20 COPPICE MANAGEMENT Rusland, South Cumbria - Weekend 11th-13th November

21 BASIC TREE FELLING Rusland, South Cumbria - Weekend 25th-27th November

22 TREE PLANTING II (TECHNIQUES) Rusland, South Cumbria - Weekend 9th-11th December

Further details from BTCV
36 St Mary's Street
Wallingford, Oxfordshire

interpretation newsletter

VIRGIL IN BRITAIN

An exhibition with this title will be held in Somerset County Museum, Taunton Castle, Taunton until the end of August, following the two-thousandth anniversary of the death of Virgil last September. It includes a collection of English translations of Virgil's works from the sixteenth century onwards, and photographs of works of art in this country which show the influence of Virgilian themes. Among these are the eighteenth-century garden at Stourhead, Wiltshire, which has quotations from the Aeneid on two of its ornamented buildings, and the original murals in the Robert Adam house in London now used by the Courtauld Institute of Art. The Museum has on permanent display the fourth-century Roman mosaic floor from Low Ham, which portrays the Dido and Aeneas story as related in the first and fourth books of the Aeneid: this is the most remarkable ancient non-manuscript piece of Virgilian iconography in Europe, and illustrations of its panels have become a feature of school texts.

WINCHESTER TIME WALK

Keith Nurse reported in the Daily Telegraph on June 6th that detailed studies are to be carried out into an ambitious £3,100,000 historical exhibition centre, offering a "time walk" display of historic Winchester from 10,000BC to the present day.

If the project is approved by the city council in about 12 month's time, the centre, to be created on the site of an Army barracks, could be ready by

1989, some two years after the Royal Green Jackets leave the site.

The council's Amenities Committee recently accepted a consultants' study on the scheme as a basis for further detailed investigation.

The project forms part of a wider plan for the development of tourism. The city has just commissioned, jointly with the English Tourist Board, a study into the subject.

Tourists in the area spend about £10m a year. It is believed that this figure could be at least doubled. The projected two-storey centre's vivid record of Winchester's History would be based on archaeological research undertaken in the city over the past 30 years.

It is envisaged that the city museum would be replaced, but that the Westgate Museum would continue.

CEE YOUTH UNIT

The Council for Environmental Education (CEE) - the national co-ordinating body for the promotion of environmental education - has taken on a Youth Unit which will allow it to extend its work further into the field of non-formal, out-of-school education. The Unit shows how environmental topics are related to the needs and interests of young people and seeks to promote the environmental element as a vital part of youth service policy, both in the statutory and voluntary sector. Further details from CEE, School of Education, University of Reading, London Road, Reading RG1 5AQ

EASTER 1984: ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING WEST CORNWALL

The 1984 Annual General Meeting will be held in West Cornwall and will place considerable emphasis on countryside interpretation, with special reference to the private sector.

The weekend will include visits to the new interpretive development at Lands End; an examination of the techniques used to interpret the Cornwall coastal footpath; how to interpret recovered under sea treasure.

The Society is currently negotiating reduced rail fares with British Rail. We intend to make the rail travel through the South West Peninsular an interpretive experience in itself. Further details in the next edition of INTERPRETATION.
