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Beneath the streets, Viking York comes back to life (see page 3).

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Government moves

The Museums Association, the Civic Trust, the Association of County Archivists and the Lancashire Trust for Nature Conservation (which covers both Merseyside and Greater Manchester), are among many heritage organisations to record their grave concern at the Government's proposals for the abolition of the metropolitan county councils and the GLC. The probable adverse effects on interpretive activities are discussed in our Viewpoint article.

The Minister of State at the Department of Trade and Industry, Norman Lamont, made a statement in November on the Government's review of tourism policy. In an attempt to boost efficiency, the BTA has been told to transfer its remaining UK activities to the national boards and concentrate on promoting Britain overseas. The BTA and English Tourist Board should share accommodation, merge common services and seek to eliminate duplication in their publications programme, he said. BTA Chairman Sir Henry Marking was to leave his post five months early, at the end of March, so that the proposed changes can be carried through by the new Chairman - leading travel industry executive Duncan Bluck. He will also chair the ETB after Michael Montague's term of office ends.

The possibility of regional tourist boards taking on additional responsibilities especially in marketing is to be explored, as well as means of attracting private finance. The improvement of hotel standards, reservation systems and signposting to tourist attractions are also under examination.

The Historic Buildings and Monuments Commission for England, under the Chairmanship of Lord Montagu of Beaulieu, takes on full powers from 1st April 1984.

Established under the National Heritage Act 1983, the Commission replaces the two standing committees of the Historic Buildings Council and the Ancient Monuments Board (England). Included in its objectives are a more lively and imaginative presentation of monuments in the care of the DoE, and grant-aid to local government, private and institutional owners. Speaking at the AGM of the

Historic Houses Association in November, the Secretary of State for the Environment, Patrick Jenkin, said he expected that the Commission would work with private sector organisations like the HHA and National Trust, and he expressed his firm belief that private ownership was the best way to preserve the nation's heritage. The present re-survey of historic buildings is expected greatly to increase the number of listed buildings, giving a better information base for the work of the Commission.

Viewpoint on Abolition

'Streamlining the Cities' is the Government's title for its White Paper proposals to abolish the Greater London Council and the English metropolitan county councils. One result of implementing these proposals as they stand at present would be to hit hard at many projects for public recreation or for interpreting the environment and heritage.

The metropolitan counties (Greater Manchester, Merseyside, South Yorkshire, Tyne and Wear, West Midlands, West Yorkshire) and Greater London spend large sums on supporting museums, art galleries, certain historic houses, parks, country parks, recreation and visitor management services. Many are directly funded and managed by these authorities, such as Kenwood House in London, Croxeth Country Park on Merseyside, ranger services in Greater Manchester river valleys and many museums. Other important facilities run by voluntary organisations would be in difficulty without the considerable grant aid at present given by metropolitan counties. Like theatres and concert halls, these buildings or services benefit people from a much wider area than the single borough or district in which they happen to be located. They meet a regional need, covering a whole conurbation. And yet the Government's proposals hope that all funding at present provided by the metropolitan counties will be made good by the hard-pressed district council concerned, or by informal federations of districts.

Is this realistic? Budgets of many metropolitan districts are already under severe strain. Their responsibilities will in most cases cover the whole range of local authority services from education or housing to social services, transport, roads and environmental health. How many of them will be able to afford to continue to support all the cultural, heritage, interpretive and recreational provision which does so much now to enhance the quality of life in these areas? Even if they have the money, how many district councils will be able to give high priority to this aspect of their responsibilities? How many will care enough? Some metropolitan districts already have an outstanding record of support in this field but they are few and the overall prospect is gloomy.

The political arguments over how to run metropolitan local government will last for many months. Whatever the final outcome, it is to be hoped that better arrangements can be devised to ensure continued official funding for recreation, cultural pursuits and interpretation of our heritage.

Brian Lybery

Interpret Britain Award

The idea of an interpretive award scheme was put forward in a Viewpoint article by Alan Machin in 1981 (*Interpretation no. 19*). His proposal that SIBH should encourage high standards of interpretive practice in this tangible way has been followed by much discussion as to the form such a scheme might take, and its financial and administrative feasibility.

Now with generous grant-aid of £15,000 from the Carnegie UK Trust, the Society is able to announce the launch of the Interpret Britain Award, to coincide with the BTA's Heritage '84 promotion. Award schemes are not generally part of the Carnegie Trustees' policies, but because of their links with SIBH and their interest in the development of interpretation, they

have agreed to the special launching grant to cover the initial three years. Thereafter commercial sponsorship is to be sought.

The award is open to public, private or charitable organisations in the UK who interpret our heritage for the benefit of the general public. Applications will be invited in April and May from providers of interpretive facilities or services. Eligible types of interpretation will include exhibitions and displays, publications (excluding newspapers, magazines, articles and broadcasts), trails, audiovisual presentations, ranger services and guides, on-site interpretation or living history. Special attention will be given to the role played by volunteers in the design, planning or implementation of interpretive

schemes. This is to satisfy the criteria of CUKT's policies and charitable work.

Judging by a national panel with regional assessors will take place during the summer, with the announcement of award winners and commendations in November/December. The Centre for Environmental Interpretation has agreed to provide the secretariat, and will have entry forms and guidance notes available after the launch. This is scheduled for 21st March at the House of Lords, hosted by our President, Lord Sandford, and the Chairman of the All-Party Heritage Committee, Patrick Cormack MP, with the Chairman of CUKT, Mr. Timothy Colman.

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An Experiment in Archaeological Site Interpretation



Peter Addyman

Director, York Archaeological Trust

Anthony Gaynor

Managing Director, Cultural Resource Management Ltd., and Project Director, Jorvik Viking Centre

The interpretation and display of excavated archaeological sites for the public is rarely attempted in Britain, and even less frequently is it successful. Most attempts hitherto have concerned sites where there are outstanding remains of stone buildings, or reasonably displayable mosaics. The majority of these are monuments in state guardianship, where the well-tried techniques of conservation and minimal interpretation have produced monuments which demand a considerable commitment to learning from the visitor. There is also a marked imbalance in the types of archaeological monument available for visits by the public, in favour of the Roman period and of medieval buildings of higher social status, with some periods almost completely unrepresented and some types of site totally unavailable to the interested layman.

Even the rescue archaeology of the 1970s produced few new viewable monuments, and many opportunities for exploitation of sites as educational, recreational and touristic resources were inexcusably missed. Three times in the last decade in York, displayable monuments of quite outstanding interest were carefully re-interred, and the sites redeveloped around them, so that a future and more caring - or perhaps more opportunist - generation might at least have the option of displaying them. In many places a more irrevocable course of action was taken, the argument that it was better not to offend developers by holding up development or redesigning buildings counting for more than demands that posterity should not be denied its inheritance.

Evidently the public does have feelings on the issue. Where the attempt has been made to show off even a selection of the evidence from an important excavation on the site at which it was found, people have flocked to see it. The Roman Palace displayed at Fishbourne near Chichester is not the easiest place to reach, but many thousands have made the pilgrimage. In York, where excavations have been in progress continuously on a variety of sites over the past decade, visitors have always come to see whatever project is open to inspection. Their fascination by what they see probably owes more to the human weakness for watching other people at work than to their understanding of what is being uncovered, for working archaeological sites are often extremely difficult to interpret. However,

market research carried out using returnable visitor comment cards soon demonstrated that a very large majority of visitors to one of the recent York sites, at Coppergate, had one common reaction. It was a feeling ranging from sadness through despair to outrage that the archaeological remains had to be destroyed by new development.



The Coppergate dig in 1980 (photo: M. Duffy).

Opportunity and options

The Jorvik Viking Centre has been built as one possible answer to the problem of preserving some of the less durable remains of the past in the context where they make some sense. The archaeology of cities is often extremely complex, the excavation sites frequently very deep, and the constraints imposed by the modern built environment usually almost overwhelming. Where, as in York, there are waterlogged conditions, the data survival rate can be extraordinary, making possible the reconstruction of even the most informal details of city life in the past. At the Coppergate site in particular, evidence was recovered which made it possible to postulate with a fair degree of certainty the varying land use in the area from the 1st century AD almost to the present.

The data was especially full for the Anglo-Scandinavian period (866-1067 AD), the largest and most striking artefacts being the Viking age timber buildings themselves, sometimes over 8m long, and in some cases still standing almost 2m high. No secular

buildings of this period survive in England, and it seemed especially important that these buildings should be preserved, to provide for the first time a chance for specialists and the public alike to glimpse the character of vernacular building in the pre-Conquest period.

There were several options. The usual one would have been to make a full photographic, drawn and written record, and to discard the timbers. A second option would have been to remove the buildings, conserve them, then re-erect them in a museum gallery. This option was not practicable in York, as the Yorkshire Museum, built in the 1820s for an already large collection, is now 150 years later only very slightly bigger, and quite inadequate for the existing collections; moreover the expense of an extension was beyond the contemplation of either York City Council or North Yorkshire County Council. A further option was to build a special display area away from the site; and a final option was to create an environment on the site itself, below the new shopping development proposed for Coppergate, where the buildings could be set out more or less where they were discovered.

A scheme was prepared for the last option, after professional advice at the highest level of the Museum profession stressed the desirability of retaining the buildings at the level, deep below York, and in the position, in the city centre, where they had been found. The impact which this would create in the public mind was felt to be a supremely compelling argument in favour of this option. After some false starts, a scheme prepared by the York Archaeological Trust was finally approved by York City Council, taking the form of an underground archaeological basement below a shopping arcade designed by Chapman Taylor and Partners for Wimpey Property Holdings, to be called the Jorvik Viking Centre. Now completed, the Centre opens this April.

Funding for the Centre

The Trust is an educational charity, with as its prime charitable objective the education of the public in archaeology, so the Coppergate proposals fell squarely within its remit, although in practice most of its

Cover photo by Mike Duffy for York Archaeological Trust.

work had hitherto been rescue excavation in and around York (see *Interpretation* no 15, Spring 1980). As a charity, however, the Trust had no great funds at its command. It was rapidly apparent that, at least under the Ancient Monuments legislation then in force, the government was not in a position to help finance the display and interpretation of remains resulting from rescue excavation. The local authorities were no more in a position to finance a buried museum than they had been a ground level one.

In the event the Trust, advised and encouraged by a distinguished and successful Lancashire entrepreneur, C. Ian Skipper, devised a scheme with potential commercial viability which, with the essential prerequisite of a £250,000 grant from the English Tourist Board (their highest-ever grant for a single project), proved attractive enough and sound enough to gain a loan of £1.4m from a consortium of seven banks syndicated for the Trust by N.M. Rothschild and Son. The balance of the £2.6m cost for construction and fitting out was loaned by Mr. Skipper, or provided through loan facilities from Wimpey Property Holdings plc., the developers. The scheme depended upon visitor figures of 500,000 per year, with an entrance charge at about the level of a cinema ticket, and a profitable shop. Although such a visitor figure would place the Jorvik Viking Centre amongst the most successful 'attractions' in the country, nevertheless it was felt to be achievable with an imaginative display and systematic marketing. The Minster and the National Railway Museum have well over a million through the portals annually, and the adjacent Castle Museum has achieved over 800,000.

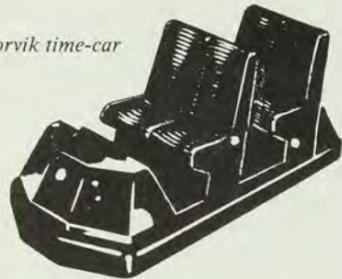
The Trust was invited to design its centre within a basement of some 1500 sq.m., and in addition it was leased two adjacent shops in the new shopping mall to provide a ground floor entrance. Administrative offices for the Jorvik Viking Centre are provided at first floor level. Visitors enter the Centre at the end of the shopping mall, through an arcaded brick entrance passage and are controlled at a computerised ticket desk in the foyer before they make their way down a broad stair or, if they are disabled, descend by lift. Already on the way down there are murals, based on Viking ships excavated in Denmark, and distinctive music synthesised from the notes of a Viking age boxwood pan-pipe excavated on the Coppergate site. From the bottom of the stairs they embark on a carefully programmed sequential experience designed to build up in logical steps an understanding of Viking York, the archaeological process, and the significance both of the Viking contribution to the city's history, and the archaeologist's role in elucidating it.

The visit sequence

A first element is designed as an orientation area, where the various correct perceptions that average people have about the Viking age are subtly confirmed, while the many appalling misconceptions the Trust encountered in its market research exercises

are equally unostentatiously corrected. At this point the visitor steps into a transportation vehicle and enters the second element (the time tunnel) which is designed to stress the very long period of time that has elapsed since the Viking age: a simple enough concept, but one which the average person finds extremely difficult to grasp, and which it is difficult meaningfully to convey. The time tunnel gradually leads

Jorvik time-car



the visitor away from 20th century Coppergate and the sounds of its shopping crowds, to Coppergate with its shopping crowds in the 10th century. A third element presents the visitor with a complete reconstruction of an alley off Coppergate, with rows of 10th century timber buildings set on long narrow tenements which run back from the street.

This reconstruction is, in fact, a three-dimensional archaeological interpretation of the immensely detailed archaeological evidence. Each building, each activity, and each element of the environment is directly based on excavated evidence, or deduced indirectly, or, if Coppergate has itself not produced such evidence, based on historical, other archaeological or pictorial sources. The visit to the alley ends at a wharf on the nearby river Foss, after which the visitor enters the fourth element of the centre. Here are laid out the excavated Viking buildings, replaced as near as possible to their original layout, after having been conserved. The area is set out as though the buildings are being revealed in the excavation, just as a visitor to the site in the late 1970s would have seen them. The opportunity is taken to stress how each building in the reconstructed alley is based on the equivalent remains here, and each aspect of that reconstruction is based on archaeological evidence. The archaeological process is also explained.

The visitor follows the artefacts and information from the site into a finds shed, where registration processes are in progress, then into laboratories for conservation and environmental study. Finally, visitors move through a photo display of the research and publication processes. The visitor then enters a fifth element, much more like a conventional museum gallery, where the smaller artefacts are displayed in cases and explained in graphics. The sixth and final element is a shop, where reproductions of artefacts in the adjacent gallery, together with souvenirs, guides, and a range of explanatory booklets, guides, teachers' aids and audio-visual products are sold. Visitors then return to ground level, leaving the building by a separate exit which ensures that they do not cross the path of those

about to enter.

The somewhat rigid layout of the Jorvik Viking Centre is partly determined by the problems inherent in controlling large numbers of people in a constricted underground environment, where fire regulations strictly limit the density of people in any area at one time. It nevertheless also stems from the Trust's conviction that the story it has to tell is immensely complicated, quite new even to most specialist visitors, and best told this way. The sequence has been arranged to build up comprehension cumulatively. There are a limited number of clear take-home messages. Those with limited background knowledge or modest capacity for insight will receive them at one level, while the more experienced will receive a correspondingly more complex story. Those who wish to do so can linger longer in the orientation area, and visitors who wish to examine and ponder the artefact display can do so at their leisure.

In the main part of the display, from the time tunnel to the laboratory area, the fire restrictions and the nature of the displays have, however, caused the Trust to adopt the device of transporting visitors in 4-person battery driven time-cars. Each car has a synchronised low-level commentary, which can just be heard above the general background sound collage which is provided by a Mackenzie 64-speaker system in the time tunnel. Coppergate reconstruction and excavation area. There is a choice of three languages for the car commentary.

The multidisciplinary team

The creation of so innovative and complex an exhibition in such an unconventional location has inevitably brought its problems. The Trust has had the benefit of architects Robertson Ward Associates, who have extensive experience of designing for the leisure industry, and whose solutions combine a liveliness and colour boldness not normally associated with the exposition of archaeological data. To create the time tunnel, Coppergate alley, reconstruction of the excavation and finds processing area, the Trust has employed the Wakefield-based Yorkshire Communications Group. YCG has brought together a team with experience in creative design, set construction and dressing, lighting and communication in various forms. They have decided to make extensive use of figures in the time tunnel, created for them by Derek Freeborn. In the Coppergate alley there are some 20 Viking figures, sculpted in clay and moulded in fibreglass by Graham Ibbeson. There has been constant liaison with York Archaeological Trust archaeologists on details of the dress of these figures, as with everything else. The buildings have been designed under the supervision of Richard Hall, director of the Coppergate excavation, with constant input from the research staff of the Environmental Archaeology Unit of the University of York, and from Dominic Tweddle, finds research director of the Trust. Expert advice from a range of specialists in the UK and abroad has been drawn on for the reconstructions. The



Life-size figures portray home life in Viking Coppergate (photo: M. Duffy).

various conversations to be heard in the Coppergate alley, all in Old Norse, have been devised by Professor Christine Fell and recorded under her direction by a team of Old Norse speakers. The recordings have been integrated into general sound collages by Trevor Wishart of the Department of Music, University of York.

Nothing creates atmosphere in a reconstruction so immediately as smell, and Dale Air Conditioning Ltd. of Lytham St. Annes have devised a system of balanced olfactory experiences appropriate to various parts of the alley. Lighting for the YCG areas has been designed by Playlight Ltd of Manchester, specialist TV set lighting engineers. The design controller for the areas devised by YCG has been John Sunderland, the set building team has been led by Jonathan Bean, while the YCG team as a whole has been led by Colin Pyrah. The combination of the various disciplines in the academic and communications fields is unique in archaeological interpretation.

Artefacts and souvenirs

The complicated task of conserving waterlogged Viking age timbers was carried out under the supervision of the Trust's Conservation Officer, Jim Spriggs. After placing in position in the Centre, the timbers required special humidification equipment, designed as part of the air handling system for the Centre as a whole. The Conservation Laboratory staff of the Trust have also worked closely with Robertson Ward Associates to ensure excellent environmental conditions in the Artefact Hall. The hall is designed as a series of alcoves, each devoted to a different theme, with a top-lit island case in each, provided with a local environment appropriate to the archaeological materials to be exhibited within. Visitors with time to devote to the Artefact Hall can examine at their leisure not only the major finds in the

island cases, but additional supporting material, both artefacts and graphics, in the alcove behind. Those who are short of time, or whose interest is flagging, can be assured of seeing the most important items simply by walking down the central alleyway between the island cases.

The Jorvik Viking Centre shop is an extension of a marketing system developed during and after the Coppergate excavations by Cultural Resource Management Ltd., the commercial arm of the Trust, which has built up considerable experience in the marketing of historically or archaeologically associated souvenirs in York. The Centre shop will carry a range largely based on the site, its artefacts and its story, but with supplementary material of Viking association from many parts of Britain and Europe. Special ranges cater for children, and souvenirs vary from the overtly didactic to the frankly light-hearted. The Trust accepts this, and is glad that one of the most popular products is a T-shirt emblazoned 'Erik Bloodaxe rules OK'. It at least causes the purchaser to ask 'Who was Erik Bloodaxe?' - and to convey the news to anyone whom he or she meets*.

Technical innovations

During the design and construction of the Jorvik Viking Centre a number of specific technical problems presented themselves, the likes of which have probably not before been encountered in museum design. Not the least has been the creation of the time-cars. The display concept called for a quite different type of vehicle from those encountered in Disneyland and other leisure centres. These gain their impact from speed and excitement. The Jorvik Viking Centre calls for a very slow, silent ride, and the cars themselves have been designed to be as unobtrusive as possible,

*last Viking king of York, featured in the Centre's logo.

so that, after the initial surprise of entering a car, the visitor forgets them as anything more than a convenient means of avoiding 'museum fatigue'. To achieve this, the whole of the main display area has been built on one level, so that minimum propulsion power is required. There is no call for acceleration or braking, and as a result it has been possible to use a very simple technology, with long life batteries recharged only once per day as the propulsion source. The technology was designed for automated warehouses, but the adaptations, drive systems, and electronic controls have been devised by Peter Millward, an engineer of the highest standing in the field of micro-electronics.

The problems of fire prevention and emergency procedures have been of an order quite different to those encountered in more conventional museum displays, or in buildings sited above ground. While there are fire exits directly into a sunken service yard, many of the restrictions appropriate to an underground building have been applied by the Fire Prevention Officer. The smoke extraction requirements, for instance, necessitated particularly sophisticated and powerful smoke extraction and air handling systems. While every attempt has been made to use authentic material for the dressing of the replicated areas, obviously some (e.g. thatch) are highly flammable and have had to be either fireproofed or made of alternative materials. The operation has necessitated close and repeated consultation between project manager, designer, architects, heating and ventilation engineers, the local fire prevention officer, and the National Fire Research Station at Borehamwood, Herts.

Archaeology made entertaining

The Centre has had its critics, not least from the academic world. The main reservations stem from the inability of individual visitors to programme the duration of parts of their visit. However, for the specialist visitor, full documentation for every artefact on display is available, and a manual has been prepared which explains the archaeological justification for all aspects of the reconstruction and the evidence upon which they are based.

The tourist industry has warmly welcomed (and substantially financed) the Viking Centre and Michael Montague, Chairman of the English Tourist Board, referred to it as the most exciting tourism project yet seen in this country. The volume of work required to service the high level of patronage by public figures and the deliberate and planned media coverage which has been generated, have led to the creation of three full-time staff posts.

The York Archaeological Trust has been ever conscious of the need to maintain the total academic integrity of the display whilst at the same time educating the public in archaeology in an entertaining and enjoyable manner. In this way we feel that we have created a substantial and meaningful archaeological experience for far more people than normally enter the portals of a conventional museum.



The hoped-for influx of tourists attracted to Liverpool by the 1984 International Garden Festival should give a boost to another much-publicised new attraction. Beatle City, a £2m tribute to the Merseyside 'Fab Four', opens its doors in March to all those Beatle fans young and old who make the pilgrimage to the birthplace of the Mersey Sound. It will of course be open '8 days a week'.

Developed by Liverpool's very successful commercial radio station, Radio City, with support from Merseyside County Council, Beatle City is billed as a multi-media 'total experience', with Beatles memorabilia, instruments, clothing, archive film and above all the sounds of what was perhaps the most influential group in the history of popular music. General manager Roger White believes that this permanent exhibition will be the first of its kind, creating a new type of visitor experience as the story of the group is re-told from the heady days of Beatlemania to the final break-up.

The Curator is Helen Simpson, whose previous job with the Merseyside County Museums archives service belies the breadth of her interests and abilities (including regular participation in Civil War re-enactments). Designer for the scheme is Colin Milnes, principal of Colin Milnes and Associates of Coventry, whose previous assignments include the Bass Museum, Chatterley Whitfield and City of Stoke Museum.

Beatle City have produced a publicity pamphlet on the Design Brief for the exhibition. Most of what follows is reprinted from this, with acknowledgement.

The birth of the idea

During the last decade considerable thought has been given to the establishment in Liverpool of a memorial to the Beatles. Unfortunately the debate has frequently become bogged down in long-running arguments about the form that this should take.

During a visit to the States, a BTA mission was told that a Beatles Birthplace museum would attract thousands of Americans to Liverpool. Indications of the potential interest are clearly apparent in the success of the Cavern Mecca Beatles Centre in Mathew

Street, the occasional concerts organised by Radio City, and the Beatle Tours run by Merseyside County Council Tourism Department.

The first major auction of Beatles' memorabilia took place at Sotheby's in December 1981, when the managing director of Radio City was successful in acquiring a substantial collection of material. From January 1982 onwards Radio City became increasingly committed to the idea of establishing what was to become known as Beatle City. Further important acquisitions were made in New York later that year.

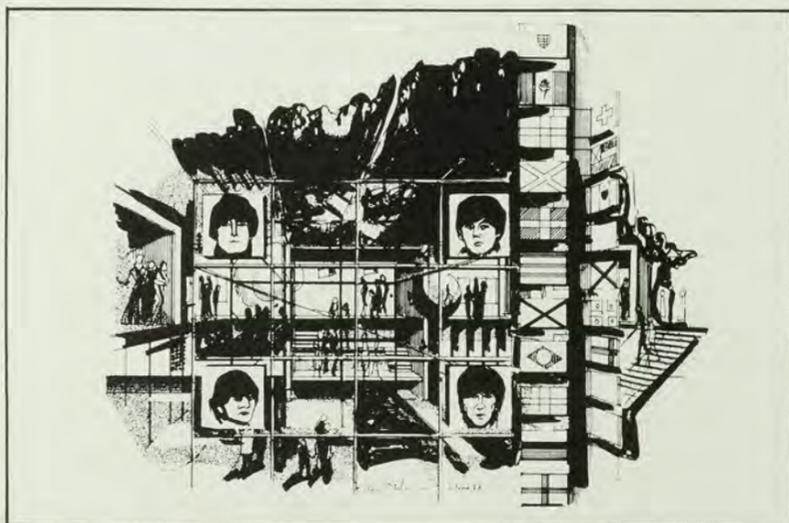
By this time, mail received by Radio City from all over the world was bringing further offers, advice and requests for information. At about the same time Radio City went public, stating in its prospectus that it was the board's intention to use part of the money raised from the share issue to finance the installation of Beatle City. Further purchases were made, and items received by loan or donation from private individuals.

The aims

The aim of the exhibition is to tell the story of the origins, rise to fame and subsequent careers of the Beatles, emphasising their Liverpool background and the tremendous impact which they made on the world of popular music and the cultural life of a generation.

The exhibition is to be lively and compelling, making full use of the possibilities afforded by the recorded music of the group and the abundant film archive. There is also the possibility of providing a library of documents, photographs, advertising material, records and tapes to form the basis of research into the history of popular music in general. If this can be established it will provide Beatle City with the essential resource for changing exhibitions and an important service to educationalists and

Working sketch of the main exhibition fascia by Colin Milnes.



academics working in this field. The reputation of the institution would be further assured by such a development.

The site

The Beatle City premises are in Seel Street, in the heart of Liverpool's traditional clubland, only two minutes from the shopping centre and within easy walking distance of mainline and underground railways, bus routes and other attractions within the city. Seel Street provides a sound Beatle pedigree, being close to the sites of numerous locations with significance in the Beatles' early careers.

The premises are recently vacated buildings formerly used as the parts department of a motor dealer, covering some 14,000 square feet and consisting of a main hall of approximately 10,000 square feet, 2,000 square feet of office and administration space, a yard and a workshop. There is service access to the rear and a coach park. All access for visitors will be ramped for the disabled and any raised areas will also be accessible to the disabled.

The story

The exhibition will concern itself with the Beatles story from about 1956 to the present day. Clearly the period 1960 to 1970 will be of the greatest interest since it covers the time when the group were active together. However the exhibition will also deal with related events and other personalities in the story.

The first part of the exhibition will attempt through various media to introduce the Liverpool of the 50s and early 60s. Using photographs, film and sound, the personality of the city and the river will provide powerful opening images which clearly establish Liverpool as the place where it all began.

Thereafter John, Paul, George and Ringo will be introduced through biographical profiles, plus other people who appear in

the story, like Stuart Sutcliffe and Peter Best.

The exhibition takes a unique and flexible approach to the story, combining the memorabilia with film, video, special effects and, of course, the recorded music. The development of the Beatles Sound is being presented by creating sound zones, where the sounds that are heard will be isolated from other parts of the exhibition.

There is also a desire to show the exhibits in the correct setting, so set-piece displays, such as a re-creation of the Cavern or a television studio, are linked by more open areas, all surrounding a central space-frame structure which utilises the available space to a maximum. Detailed input has been received from individuals who were significant contributors to the Beatle story and they have received the concept with enthusiasm.

The design process

Colin Milnes writes:

We always say that a project or a design is as good as the client allows it to be. In this instance we have been very fortunate in that our terms of reference included the research of the story, and the writing of the exhibition script. This enabled us to write the script in a form that we knew would enhance the visual and audible qualities of the exhibition. The client appreciated the need to allow the exhibition designer freedom from structural constraints, and gave us the leading role in the team of consultants involved in the project.

It meant that the actual story would be able to influence the shape and style of the exhibition. We were not to be inhibited by architectural or any other technical limitations. This actually is an enlightened approach; one often finds that designers are given a building which has been modified before our involvement, and we are inhibited from the word go. Thus with this freedom we were able to prepare a script which was broken down into sounds rather than features in the story. This exhibition is primarily the story of sounds. The division into sound zones has strongly influenced the exhibition, but has not dictated the use of space to the extent that we lose vision of the exhibition as a whole.

One of the most demanding parts of designing the basic layout of the exhibition was the justifiable requirement to allow wheelchair-bound visitors to enjoy the whole exhibition. That aspect had as much influence on the general design as the consideration of retaining quality sound. Allowing visitors in wheelchairs in is one thing, enabling them to get out in an emergency from any direction is quite another. Added to this was the need to get these visitors into areas of controlled sound. These contrasting requirements were typical of the unique problems we encountered; the solutions we offer we hope enhance the enjoyment of visitors.

© Beatle City Ltd., Seel Street, Liverpool.

A British Science Centre

Michael B. Quinion

Arthur C. Clarke once said that the products of any sufficiently advanced technology would be indistinguishable from magic. He was discussing the possible impact of a more advanced extra-terrestrial civilisation on our own, but in truth the same cultural shock occurs every day within our society when the vast majority of the population meets the products of the inventive and knowledgeable few. Ours is the first era in which nearly everyone can enjoy the products of civilisation, but few understand how they work.

This lack of understanding is both profound and worrying - look at a typical house of today, with its video recorder, deep freeze, television and micro-processor-controlled washing machine. Of how many of them can you honestly say you understand their basic principles, let alone how to repair them? More depressing still, how many people understand those long-established and familiar objects, the internal combustion engine, the radio and the telephone? Even the ubiquitous electricity is totally mysterious to most people, being equally capable in everybody's kitchen of heating, cooling, lighting, cooking, washing, drying and timing things. Yet, for all that most people know about it, electricity might as well be magic.

If only an elite understands the basic principles of science and technology then most people will find it impossible to make reasoned decisions about the value of the changes they bring about. And if people are continually subjected to technological innovations in matters that touch their everyday lives without understanding them, distrust and fear will inevitably follow.

We need to take the mystery out of science and technology. Traditional education finds it difficult to excite interest and appreciation in school children, and can do virtually nothing for adults. Science museums have a place, but their considerable responsibilities for collecting and preserving the physical evidence of the development of science mean that the resources they can apply to the interpretation of fundamental concepts must be limited.

The method that has grown up across the Atlantic to interpret science and technology is the science centre. The first of these was the San Francisco Exploratorium, Frank Oppenheimer's concept of a place where visitors could come in a spirit of fun to investigate and understand scientific and technological themes. It has been very successful and since its opening in 1967 has inspired a number of others.

But the concept of the science centre has

not attracted much public attention in Britain, even though we are so good at creating museums of science, technology and industry.

But now the plans of a Bristol-based group are well advanced for creating an Exploratorium in the city. The group, the Exploratory, is headed by Professor Richard Gregory, a world expert on the psychology of perception and head of the Brain and Perception Laboratory at the University of Bristol. A building has been offered by the City Council, a pump-priming grant from the Nuffield Foundation is funding a feasibility study, and a group of about fifty academics, businessmen, museum specialists and communicators has been brought together to advance the ideas.



Interactive scientific discovery: what happens when you blow air between two hanging spheres? (Turn the page to find out...)

The Trustees envisage a phased development leading to eventual occupation of about 80,000 sq. ft., attracting some 500,000 visitors a year and costing about £2m at 1983 prices. It will be run by an independent charitable trust, and so will be very similar to one of the existing larger independent museums in terms of its revenue-raising opportunities and difficulties: certainly an economic admission charge will have to be made.

Like other science centres, the Exploratory will be entirely interpretive in purpose. It will not be a museum and will not house any kind of collection. So it will differ fundamentally from bodies like the Science Museum and the Natural History Museum, though the Human Biology Gallery in the latter has many exhibits which could be transferred as they stand, particularly those concerned with perception and decision-making.

It is certain that the American system of planned discovery will be used. In this, visitors are encouraged to carry out a wide range of simple experiments which are not only fun to do but which increase

Continued overleaf

their understanding of basic concepts. Such heuristic methods are known to be very effective (and the involvement of the Nuffield Foundation in the project is clearly significant).

American experience shows that experiments work best if they have three principal characteristics: they must be genuinely interactive, with the visitor playing an active decision-making role; they should if possible lead to results that are contrary to common sense (so provoking what Freeman Tilden called the 'gosh' effect), and they should be simple, both to make and to understand. The Exploratory team have coined the word 'plore', meaning something one *explores*, for one of these experiments.

For example, a plore may comprise two lightweight spheres, hanging close together, and visitors may be encouraged to blow air from the exhaust of a vacuum cleaner between them, just to see what happens. Common sense says the spheres will move apart. But they actually move together: this is surprising, so potentially interesting, and raises questions. A few words of explanation reveals that the effect is the basis of aerodynamic lift and hence of flight.

Just as simple would be to have visitors rolling balls down a straight inclined plane and a curved, cycloidal one. Although longer, the latter gets the ball to the bottom quicker: to understand why leads to some fascinating mathematical physics. What happens when you try to push a spinning gyroscope sideways is both baffling and potentially illuminating and may lead not only to a discussion of modern inertial navigational techniques but also to one reason why you can steer your bicycle without hands. Encouraging visitors to mix projected patches of coloured light leads to the discovery, surprising even to many adults, that you get different results to those more commonly encountered when mixing coloured pigments. The comparatively high pressures that can be exerted by the human lungs can be demonstrated by getting children to stand on and blow up disposable wine containers.

It is unlikely that every plore would be an interactive experiment, because some subjects do not readily lend themselves to this technique, for reasons of complexity or safety. In any case, experiments would have to be supported by other interpretive techniques in order to ensure that both the purpose of the experiment and its implications were understood.

Knowledge in science and technology is hierarchical: once you move beyond fundamentals, you will only understand a result if you have already understood a number of more simple ones. But this tree-like structure to the ideas of science and technology makes the subject particularly difficult for non-specialists, because very often, when you want to understand a new concept, you must go back to fundamentals - down to the bottom of the tree trunk if you like - and work your way back up the branches to it, learning as you go.



... Instead of moving apart, the spheres collide. A 'plore' which surprises and so is remembered (photo: The Exploratory).

So communicating scientific ideas will demand the development of connected sequences of ideas, designed to mimic their relationship in real life. This way, visitors can be led from fundamentals to some quite sophisticated concepts. But it also means a great deal of careful interpretive planning, if undue effort is not to be put into creating plores which are interesting in themselves, but which do not form part of a connected story.

The themes that connect plores will probably lie within the traditional divisions of knowledge, such as (say) time, motion or perception, but an appreciation of the way the results of science and technological development interlock might come from considering a range of themes based on some familiar object. A bicycle, for example, is a good starting point for discussing gyroscopic effects, pneumatics, gearing, the strength of tubular structures and a number of other concepts. The modern kitchen is becoming a technological jungle and this might be suitable as another connecting theme.

A number of design problems obviously arise with this interactive technique. It will be necessary to design robust plores that will resist mis-use and vandalism. Plores must also be completely safe for users of all ages.

Many of the problems of misuse and safety are minimised in American centres through the heavy use of human help - the Exploratorium calls them 'explainers'. Some are volunteers, but many are science students working their way through college. The Exploratory trustees see the advantages in using this kind of assistance - students are knowledgeable, more easily accepted by young visitors because closer to them in age, more understanding of their problems because of having only recently gone through the same process of learning, and they are available part-time. But there is little tradition of using students in this way in Britain, and some way must be found to encourage the co-operation of educational authorities and unions before the scheme can be

considered practicable.

The consequences of damage to plores can be reduced not only by careful design, but also by using easily available and disposable items (like the wine containers mentioned earlier) to make replacement simple and cheap.

But there is a much more important reason for constructing plores out of simple and readily available materials - it makes their principles easier to comprehend. Of course, it would be possible to introduce all sorts of modern equipment into plores: lasers, oscilloscopes, electronic timers, computers and the like. And indeed, each has its place in a science centre as the subject of a sequence of plores. But if such sophisticated equipment is used simply for effect (what one Exploratory adviser calls 'the gee-whiz' syndrome) it confuses rather than illuminates. Results obtained by unintelligible techniques might just as well be done by magic.

The search for simple and robust designs can be very rewarding, because it suggests we look for ideas to the way scientists carried out experiments before such sophisticated equipment was available. Galileo proved that the period of swing of a pendulum depended only on its length (thus making possible the accurate pendulum clock) by using his heartbeats to time the swings. There is some evidence he used the precise intervals created by the beats of music to time his experiments on the rate of fall of bodies down inclined planes. Such methods are appropriate to the Exploratory, not only because of their simplicity, but because of the insights they give into the way scientists have 'bootstrapped' themselves towards greater accuracy.

So the Exploratory, by re-creating such historic experiments, may after all come to be considered in part a museum, but one dedicated to the development of the scientific method.

(Michael Quinion is a member of the Scientific Committee of the Bristol Exploratory).

News from Culloden

The battlefield/graveyard of Culloden, owned by the National Trust for Scotland, is undergoing a major transformation to restore the area to its original appearance at the time of the battle in 1746, and to enlarge and improve the visitor centre.

The project is one of the biggest redevelopment programmes undertaken by the Trust. It has been made possible by the purchase of a large part of the battlefield - comprising 108 acres of land - from the Forestry Commission with grant aid from the Countryside Commission for Scotland and donations from charitable trusts.

The Forestry Commission has cleared the trees on this land to enable the area to revert to heather and allow the natural regeneration of plants and indigenous trees such as birch, but leaving a clear view over the battlefield.

A major part of the redevelopment programme will involve the re-alignment of a road which presently runs right through the battlefield and over the graves of the hundreds of Jacobites killed in the battle. The diversion of the road will take it away from the graveyard to skirt the northern edge of the battlefield. This will make it possible to re-site the existing car park, which blocks the view from the visitor centre to the battlefield. With the re-alignment of the road and the removal of the old section of road, the Jacobite

and Hanoverian battle lines facing each other can be dramatically displayed, the footpaths on the battlefield can be laid out in a more satisfactory way and visitor circulation on the battlefield improved.

The extension of the visitor centre will provide an enhanced historical display, an auditorium seating 80 people for an audio-visual presentation, bookshop, study room, tea-room and improved toilets including facilities for the disabled.

In addition the adjacent Old Leanach Cottage, thought to be of a character and style of the period, will be re-equipped in a more suitable manner with some contemporary furniture, a model of a young mother and baby and a continuous play tape of contemporary Gaelic music and verse.

Building work on the visitor centre will be completed before the start of the 1984 season. The road diversion will take place either concurrently or afterwards, depending on finance and the completion of design work. The cost of the development will be over £800,000.

The Battle of Culloden fought on 16 April 1746 marked the end of the last Jacobite uprising of 1745 when the army of Prince Charles Edward Stuart - "Bonnie Prince Charlie" - was defeated by the Hanoverian army, led by the Duke of Cumberland, in the Prince's attempt to reinstate the exiled Stuarts on the

throne of Great Britain and Ireland. It was the last land battle fought in Britain.

Culloden is one of the top five most popular properties of the Trust with nearly 88,000 visitors at the centre in 1983 and probably at least twice that number visiting the battlefield. The Trust has in its care the Graves of the Clans, the Well of the Dead, the Memorial Cairn, the Cumberland Stone, Old Leanach Cottage, and a large part of the battlefield, including the King's Stables. The present visitor centre was erected in 1970, with financial assistance from the Highlands and Islands Development Board.

Also in the care of the Trust is the Glenfinnan Monument at the head of Loch Shiel, where Prince Charles Edward's standard was raised on 19 August 1745 at the start of the rising. The Trust has also redeveloped the visitor centre at Glenfinnan and improved the historical display there.

The re-opening of the Culloden visitor centre will be one of several important NTS occasions and anniversaries celebrated by the Trust's issue of a series of philatelic commemorative covers for collectors. Others will include the 15th anniversary of Culzean-Scotland's first country park, and the opening of the Museum of Farming Life at Pitmedden.

Styal Bicentenary

A year full of commemorative events and activities is planned for 1984 at Quarry Bank Mill, Styal.

The National Trust cotton mill, now run as a working museum by an independent Trust, was founded in 1784, and is one of the finest mills of its period to survive. The bicentenary coincides with the completion of some major developments in the working Museum, illustrating the impact of the industrial revolution on the North West cotton textile industry. It is also the occasion for the launch of a new appeal, to raise £350,000 to complete the project, (including the restoration of the Apprentice House).

The Mill presents as the highlight of the year, the completion of the restoration of the 1850 Fairbairn iron suspension wheel, which is to become a unique working exhibit. From time to time it is expected to power the Mill's restored spinning mules and looms which produce, virtually as a by-product, a replica of the cloth woven in the Mill in the middle of the 19th century, and now marketed by the Mill Trust as Styal Calico.

The Mill Trust is also arranging and

hosting another cotton bicentenary - that of the start of the trade between the Southern States of America, and the industrial North West, via Liverpool. The shipment of 8 bales and 3 bags recorded in 1784 - some of it was sampled by the Gregs of Styal - was the turning point for all three regions. This August it will be fully re-enacted, including the shipment by square-rigged ship across the Atlantic to Liverpool. The arrival of the bales in Styal will be celebrated in an appropriate manner and the cotton will in due course be made into souvenirs.

Many more modest events are also planned - a Georgian Country Fair, a Descendants' Day for relatives and descendants of former mill workers and apprentices, an Apprentices' Christmas and of course, a bicentenary Dinner. Finally, to stamp a textile character on the 1984 celebrations, a Textile Festival is to be launched in October, focussing on the role of the Museum as a centre for the study of practical textile making - with seminars, celebrity classes and lectures, special markets, and events for children, including the Young Observer Dye-craft textile competition.

The bicentenary can perhaps be judged a success, if it puts the factory colony and mill of Styal firmly in the conscious mind of all those interested in our heritage, and also if it provides a positive response to the major appeal to complete the project.



Bill Brooks in the weaving shed at Styal (photo: Quarry Bank Mill Trust).

One Man's View of Teaching Tudor Domestic Life

Patrick Phillips
Kentwell Hall

All I remember of my schooling in history are dates, battles, kings and queens (good and bad), people called statesmen and something called foreign policy. I thought this last ought to deal with insurance against invasion but it was something infinitely duller. I found the subject boring and the teaching of it worse. Yet my own studies since then have excited an interest in the past which is all engrossing. This interest though has nothing to do with dates, battles, statesmen etc., or even foreign policy. It is exclusively concerned with everyday domestic life. I want to know everything about the daily lives of people of all stations in life. I should like to know this of all ages from the prehistoric up to date. But the subject is too wide and my capacity too limited to tackle such a broad spectrum. I concentrate upon what I conceive to be the beginning of the modern age - the Tudor period.

By studying everyday domestic history I hope to understand better how each aspect of our current daily life has developed and, perhaps, gain a little insight into where we may be heading. Clothes, manners, furniture, tools, food, building, indeed almost any aspect of existence has its roots in history and has developed as it has for essentially practical reasons.

I find my interest is shared by many, for most people do want to know more about themselves and aspects of life which directly affect them. The same is particularly true of children. Most of them evince a much greater interest in all aspects of domestic life than they ever do in any part of the exam syllabus which looks upon dates, battles, foreign policy etc. with such reverence.

Not only is the subject itself interesting but it can be illustrated to all the senses. You can see and touch clothes made just as they were in the XVIth century, you can eat Tudor food, you can listen to Tudor speech patterns, songs and music, use Tudor tools, walk around Tudor buildings, smell Tudor herbs. Indeed, all these aids to teaching are present still in abundance viz. Tudor buildings, or can be reproduced accurately e.g. clothes, tools, music etc.

I am lucky enough to live in one of the loveliest small Tudor mansions in the country, set now, as it was when built, in its own broad bricklined moat. We are surrounded by open country and nothing from the 20th century obtrudes (lest it be the occasional aeroplane overhead).

Here each summer we have the Kentwell



Spinning and weaving Tudor-style at Kentwell Hall.

Historical ReCreation of Everyday Tudor Domestic Life. We use only those parts of the house and the outbuildings most appropriate to the times (luckily all our exteriors are pure Tudor even if some of the interiors are not). Then with the aid of some 200 volunteers whom we recruit and, as it were, direct, we people the house and its environs with Tudor men, women and children going about their everyday business. There are haymakers in the field making hay, cooks and kitchen wenches cooking, schoolchildren being taught by a stern schoolmaster, seamstresses sewing, ladies brooding. There are gentry from middle to grand at their leisure or pleasure, washerwomen washing clothes in the moat, dairymaids making butter and cheeses, bakers baking, brewers brewing, spinners spinning. There are riders on horseback (ladies riding side-saddle) sawyers in the sawpit, carpenters and plumbers plying their trade, a blacksmith at the forge and potters in the pottery. Then there are idlers, vagabonds, pedlars and children likely to be met at every turn and perhaps a cleric or two.

We strive for authenticity in all we do and to eliminate anachronisms. The ReCreation Event is aimed at school-children. In 1983 nearly 20,000 school-children visited it; most in school parties but others with their parents. For children between 8 and, say, 11 or 12 the Event is, with few exceptions, a great success. Children of this age react to the Event as it is and are enthralled with both the activities themselves and the differences they can discern from their own life. As

the children get older they find it more difficult to adjust to the strange environment we have created and the 15 and 16 year olds sometimes try not to adjust at all. Nonetheless, by the end of their three-hour visit most of these children either have adjusted and begun to appreciate what surrounds them or have alighted upon some specific activity which excites their interest. Few boys between, say, 12 and 16 have no interest in seeing, say, armour being made or a plumber working lead. Most girls are sufficiently interested in cooking, baking, spinning, sewing etc. to want to see how it was done previously without modern aids. Activities such as playing Tudor musical instruments or dancing Tudor dances are something that many find they can enjoy even if they would never otherwise have contemplated it on their own. We can, and do, put recalcitrant children in the pillory or stocks or haul them before the steward, Head of the Household or perhaps a 'visiting' magistrate.

Teachers often report that a visit to our Historical ReCreation is worth more than one year's history lessons. This is possibly true. For children can experience the past at our Event. They can see a context which they can (perhaps only imperfectly) understand. They can talk to people out of history and learn whatever they want to know. "Do you know Mary Queen of Scots?" "I've met her". "What's she like?" "She's very tall-above 2 yards in stature". "Did you speak with her?" "But little as she only spoke French when I met her and I have little of French" "Is she

pretty?" "She is very striking on account of her height and grace; she seems very charming".

Does not such a conversation which might take barely one minute interest a child more in the Scots Queen and show her to be (or have been) more a real person than could be achieved in hours of lectures? If the child wants to know more of the Scots Queen's personality, politics, influences etc. he or she will ask and, most certainly, listen to the answers. Many a question will be answered with a question as happens in life. "Do you think Mary killed Darnley?" "I don't know, it is a wicked thing to murder your own husband but many, including her own brother, say she did. What do you think?"

The child, while principally a spectator to our Event, is nonetheless drawn into it in conversation just as he or she may be drawn in physically perhaps to help knead the dough or work the pitsaw. The child will see tools previously only encountered in pictures in textbooks being used, or clothes being worn, and thereby understanding is greatly enhanced.

What we have learnt from our Historical ReCreation is exactly what I myself learnt from my own experience. History can be an enthralling subject, one which children are eager to learn. Yet it must be presented correctly. There is no subject which is not excruciatingly dull if badly taught. There is no excuse for domestic history of any period ever being thought dull.



Author's Footnote

Kentwell's Historical ReCreation in 1984 runs from June 24th to July 15th and is entitled 'Kentwell 1610'. Though for some the Stuart era, this is for us the very epilogue of the Tudor period. After all, it was still a Tudor parliament with a Tudor chief minister, and most of the principals apart from the king himself (Raleigh and the Bacons on the one hand, all the playwrights and musicians on the other) were in with the Tudors.

The Event is for booked school parties only on weekdays but for the general public and other parties on Saturdays and Sundays 11 a.m. - 5 p.m. For further details enquiries should be made to the Secretary, Kentwell 1610, Kentwell Hall, Long Melford, Suffolk CO10 9BA.

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Behind the Battlements

Activities of a kind not dissimilar to the Kentwell Event took place in the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park in the summer of 1983.

'Behind the Battlements' was the title of a highly rewarding first excursion into theatre interpretation on the part of the Park authority, staged as their major contribution to the Festival of Castles in Wales. Judged an outstanding success, the performances - at Carew, Pembroke and Cilgerran castles and the Bishop's Palace, St. Davids - could have been sold out two or three times over.

The production was an attempt to recreate the atmosphere of life in Pembrokeshire castles around the year 1283. A group of locally-based professional actors and craftspeople were the main characters on stage, backed up by amateur participants in costume appropriate to the period, who contributed to the medieval feel of the event.

Performances had two distinct parts. First a guided walk, in which parties of visitors were passed from one character to another - the mason, priest, Lady of the Castle and other members of the household - as they walked around the fortress. This was followed by entertainment from a group of medieval travelling players, in fact the same actors and actresses. In the interval visitors could

sample soup, meat dishes and wine made to 13th century recipes.

Backed by MSC, the project employed six people: a full-time co-ordinator and clerical assistant, and four part-time area co-ordinators who did much of the liaison at the various locations. The full-time co-ordinator appointed was Keith Allen, a young Pembrokeshire man with wide experience in amateur theatre, whose enthusiastic drive was a major contribution to the scheme's success. Field Officer David Pratt, himself a leading amateur dramatist, was heavily involved and was pressed into service as Igor, Pembrokeshire's 'hunchback of Notre Dame'.

Many lessons were learned from the 1983 production, including the by no means straightforward logistics of keeping this kind of mobile theatre on the road. With plans for 1984 under way, a possible permanent venue for a new project is seen in Carew Castle. This magnificent building has been leased by the Park authority, who will undertake maintenance and partial restoration granted-aided by the Welsh Office ancient monuments branch.

Source: National Park News. See also Interpretation no. 15, Spring 1980, for more on historical re-creations in the article '17th Century Fun'.

County Trusts in Action

Much important countryside interpretation work is carried out by the County Conservation Trusts. This ranges from the management of visitor centres, nature trails and field study centres, to publication programmes, guided walks, and involvement in a variety of joint events such as the open days at Boughton House. A recent issue of the RSN's magazine *Natural World* highlights some of the historic and interesting buildings looked after by the Trusts, which even include a signal box acting as a wildlife information centre (North Wales Trust). As one of a series of occasional reports on Trust activities, Avon Wildlife Trust here describe progress on their Willsbridge Mill project.

Willsbridge Mill stands in a quiet valley on the edge of Bristol. Formerly an industrial site, the valley now survives as a peaceful sanctuary for wildlife amidst modern housing developments. To protect and conserve both the mill and valley, the site is being leased to Avon Wildlife Trust for conversion into Avon's first Wildlife and Visitor Centre.

Derelict until 1982, the mill is in the process of being restored to house exhibitions, a members' room, library, office and small shop. Building work is nearing completion, the stairs having been finally installed. Currently at the design stage, the

exhibitions will give visitors a chance to find out more about local and natural history as well as the work of the Trust. This and other interpretive material for the mill and valley aims at getting visitors actively involved and interested in conserving their natural surroundings. To take this further, the barn adjoining the mill is being given a new lease of life by converting it into a simple field study centre for visiting groups and schools.

With the enthusiastic help of local people, detailed management plans are being put into action to care for the brook and valley and improve its habitats for wildlife. 1983 was a frantic year for site management, with selective thinning of large numbers of sycamore which dominated the woodland and subsequent planting of 400 new trees. Reinstatement of the mill dam proved impossible so two ponds are being excavated on the bed of the original mill pond. Thanks to the efforts of young volunteers, a wildlife garden, designed in a competition by a WATCH Group, is at last taking shape from what was a sea of mud.

Avon Wildlife Trust

Design/Interpretation/Computers

Joyce Henderson

Department of Psychology, University of Surrey

Regional meeting held at the Geological Museum, London, 22nd October 1983

It was more by chance than by design that at the moment thousands of CND demonstrators were rallying in London, a somewhat smaller assembly of people were poised ready to listen to a presentation entitled 'Fingers on the Button' in the same city.

This one day symposium was organised jointly by SIBH and the Group of Designers/Interpreters in Museums. The fact that an audience of seventy people from a variety of disciplines was attracted is an index of the growing interest in the applications of new technology to interpretive media.

Rock'n' Roll

The day began with a visit to a new geological exhibit. After picking our way through cases of exotic, precious and semi-precious stones, we were ushered into a subterranean grotto which had the appearance of a promising discotheque - in actual fact, an early phase of the new geological exhibition.

Giles Velarde of the Geological Museum welcomed us and Ian Mercer, also of the Museum, demonstrated one of the components of the exhibition - a computer-controlled video-disc display system. From a distance, the visitor sees a screen, behind which a 3D geological artefact is displayed. On approaching sufficiently close, the visitor is presented with a 90 second display of text and slides. An interesting feature is the hierarchical nature of information presentation. After the initial display, more information may be requested from a list of alternatives by pressing the appropriate button. For more interested visitors, even more detail can be requested. It is planned to provide a series of such exhibits covering the key minerals. Discussion centred on the cost and reliability of display systems - themes echoed in subsequent presentations, and the potential advantages of using laser discs to present slides. It is envisaged that the exhibition will be completed by summer 1984. Judging from what we saw, it will be well worth a visit.

The next session, presented by Jon Hall and Phil Philips of Merseyside County Museums included a demonstration of a computerised quiz exhibit (unfortunately in competition with an ill-timed fire alarm which precipitated us en masse into the street). The types of question presented are dependent on the age of the visitor. Not only does the programme record visitors' responses for future evaluation by staff, but it collects background information also. This feature was of particular

interest to some participants who felt that it could be useful, in formative evaluation. Phil Philips did point out some shortcomings however, in that a questionnaire survey carried out in parallel with the computer collection of data revealed discrepancies between the two sources on the age of visitors using the computer exhibit. It seems that younger visitors, given the opportunity, like to pretend to be older than they are.

The message from the medium

Andrew Chadwick's talk was entitled 'Computers as an aid to Interpretation and Design'. Starting with the controversial idea for interpreters that 'the medium is the message' he reviewed the contribution of computers to the design process: the enormous amount of information that can be stored, the level of detail, the accuracy and the calculative power - all of which give the designer greater freedom to manipulate objects and make decisions at the design stage. This point was illustrated with examples from building designs, which demonstrated the fine level of detail possible, even down to the design on a single floor tile. Other slides showed the uses of 3D graphics in looking, for example, at overlays in a multi-storey building.

Andrew Chadwick underlined the fact that, far from making the design process automatic, computer graphics make greater demands of the designers. Because the information provided is more accurate and malleable, more and better decisions have to be made to gain real benefit from it. Computer aided design (CAD) is only as good as the designer using it.

Applying these general principles, Andrew Chadwick spelt out some of the implications of CAD for museums. In principle, any building or object could be represented graphically, including the entire contents of a museum - an obvious aid to indexing. The possibility of integrating graphic and non-graphic information means that a variety of types of information about any object including holograms, could be stored. One particularly futuristic suggestion was the ultimate interconnection of softwares, (currently being developed in isolation from each other) to provide integrated design systems.

Participants were somewhat sceptical of the immediate applications of CAD, especially in view of the immense cost involved. However, Andrew Chadwick's talk was a fascinating glimpse of a possible future.

Stayin' Alive

In the final paper, Dr. Rodney Eastwood

of the Natural History Museum brought us firmly back to earth with a considered appraisal of different types of computer exhibits. In contrast to the previous speaker, he made the point that the medium is **not** the message in computer exhibits. He took the view that such exhibits, of which there are nine in the Natural History Museum, demonstrate better than other media many processes and relationships in science.

Three types of exhibit were reviewed - the question and answer type, simulations and group exhibits. The first type present the visitor with a question and a set of possible responses, one of which is selected by pressing the appropriate button. These exhibits were felt to be the least powerful form of computer exhibit as the visitor remains largely passive. Simulations demand more of the visitor. These model an event and require the participant to 'get inside the system' and acquire some understanding of how the components relate to each other in order to create a meaningful outcome. A good example of this is the homeostasis exhibit in the Natural History Museum, where the aim is to stay alive. Few visitors apparently manage to do this first time. Finally, group exhibits offer the possibility of involving a number of people simultaneously in a computer-aided learning situation. This was felt to be an interesting new idea which could powerfully demonstrate how things are taught or learned. Only one such exhibit is thought to exist at present however.

Caution: computers at work

The presentations and demonstrations ranged over a number of exciting possibilities from laser disc and integrated design systems to micro-processor-controlled group exhibits. In all the euphoria over the new technology perhaps it is appropriate to sound a cautionary note. There are precedents for technological innovation creating a momentum and commitment which is unrelated to the needs and practicalities of the time. As David Uzzell commented, it should not be assumed that computers are attractive to everyone. Some people regard them as impersonal, remote and distancing. It is important to evaluate how computer-controlled exhibits relate to visitors' actual needs and what the advantages are, if any, over other media. In particular, how can computers further interpretation?

For those who are interested in the application of computer technology to exhibition design and interpretation, but were unable to attend, the Proceedings of the one-day Symposium have now been published (see Resources section).

✂ in brief

The Museums Association has appointed barrister John Fox, formerly Deputy Director and Company Secretary of the National Foundation for Educational Research, to the new post of Director General of the Association.

The Government has announced the criteria for identification and selection of monuments for scheduling. They are: survival/condition, period, rarity, fragility/vulnerability, diversity, documentation, group value and potential.

The Director of the Field Studies Council, Charles Sinker, retired at the end of 1983 on the grounds of ill health, having been with the Council since 1946. He is succeeded by Tony Thomas.

A 2½ mile corridor of land along the Birmingham Canal between Smethwick and West Bromwich is being developed by West Midlands County Council as the Galton Valley Canal Park. Restoration of the canal features and improvements for recreational use will be complemented by provision of information boards and educational facilities.

The National Maritime Museum intends to introduce an admission charge of £1.50 on 1st April, subject to discussion with the Office of Arts and Libraries. The revenue will be used to re-open on Mondays and to finance increased marketing of the Museum. A reduced-price ticket for neighbourhood residents is proposed.

The Duke of Buccleuch, whose Boughton estate open days have been described in earlier issues of *Interpretation*, has won the second Countryside Commission/Country Landowners Association annual award, this year made to the landowner doing most to improve understanding between the urban and rural communities.

Two derelict barns at Higher Kiln Quarry, Buckfastleigh, Devon (a cave site owned by the Royal Society for Nature Conservation) have been renovated as the William Pengelly Cave Studies Centre. Voluntary effort aided by grants has enabled one to be converted for residential and educational use and the other to open as a small cave science museum.

A number of interpretive and conservation projects connected with waterside habitats will be initiated this year under the banner of the 1983/4 Council of Europe environmental campaign, Water's Edge. In the UK the campaign is being led by the Nature Conservancy Council, with the national secretariat provided by CoEnCo.



Ludlow Civic Society is in process of erecting up to 100 circular information plaques on buildings around the town, in a scheme to make the history and architecture of the town accessible to both visitors and residents. The plaques will tell the story of Ludlow's development since Norman times. An accompanying leaflet on Ludlow Walks is available.

The Government is setting up a Chatham Historic Dockyard Trust with an endowment of £11m to promote and manage the now closed Royal Naval Dockyard in Kent, with emphasis on restoration of buildings to their original uses.

The '800 Years of Coal' Heritage Trail at the Scottish Mining Museum, Prestongrange was due for completion in March. Prestongrange Visitor Centre is being developed to provide exhibition space and an auditorium for audiovisual shows.

The opening last September of the Greater Manchester Museum of Science and Industry in the converted Liverpool Rd Station, for a preview season, marked a major stage in the development of Britain's first Urban Heritage Park. The Museum includes a power hall, historical trail, and other displays linked to the Castlefield area. A joint SIBH/CEI visit is planned for July, and it is hoped to print an article on the Park in the next issue. Details of the Urban Heritage Park from Castlefield Visitor Centre, 061-832 4244.

Among the commendations in last season's Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors awards for outstanding work in the conservation and improvement of the physical environment, was a further accolade for The Great Barn at Avebury (Wiltshire Folk Life Society). The theme of the 1984 awards, offered in conjunction with The Times, is Conserving the Industrial Heritage. Entries closed at the end of February.

The English Tourist Board and the Civic Trust are promoting a pioneering project in Chester, to first identify and then initiate action to overcome environmental pressures caused by visitors to the city. Earlier in the year they advertised for a consultant to seek for solutions which will help conserve and enhance the historic environment at the same time as encouraging the long-term prosperity of the tourism industry in Chester.



courses & conferences

13-14 April
Countryside Recreation Management Association Spring Seminar: 'Commercial opportunities for countryside recreation management', Reading University. Details from Keith Wheal, CRMA Secretary, 59 Common Lane, East Ardsley, Wakefield, W. Yorks, WF3 2EL.

13-15 April
SIBH Annual Conference and AGM, Rochester. Details circulated separately.

23-27 April
Seventh European Heritage Landscapes Conference: 'Land management for conservation in Parcs Naturels, Naturparke, National Parks (UK) and equivalent reserves', Losehill Hall, address below.

27-29 April
York Archaeological Weekend: 'Presenting the Past to the Present'. Details from T.D. Bilham, Director of Continuing Education, Leeds University, Leeds LS2 9JT (0532 435036).

28-29 April
Association for Industrial Archaeology (Education Group) Conference: 'Industrial Archaeology as a Learning Resource', Lymington. Bookings: Dr. Edwin Course, Dept. of Adult Education, Southampton University, Southampton SO9 5NH.

21 May
Heritage Co-ordination Group Conference: 'Conservation, who pays? who cares?'. Contact Mrs. C. Downes, Little Marsh, Beaulieu, Hants.

21-25 May
Peak National Park Study Centre In-Service Training Course: 'Landscape Conservation', Losehill Hall, Castleton, Derbys. S30 2WB (0433 20373).

21-25 May
Pennine Heritage Network Course: 'Practical Information and Interpretation Techniques', The Birchcliffe Centre, Hebden Bridge, HX7 8DG. Contact Maria Murtagh for details of this and other courses (0422 844450).

2-6 July
World Federation of Friends of Museums 5th International Congress: 'Which Public? For which Museum? With which Friends?', Paris. Details from Mrs. Pat Prestwich, The Aviary, Worsley, Manchester M28 4NJ (061-794 1323).

6-8 July
Group of Designers/Interpreters in Museums Weekend Workshop: 'Towards better exhibitions - the management of interdisciplinary teams', York University. Details from Moira Stevenson Silk Museum, Baths House, 1 Canal St., Macclesfield, Cheshire.

10-14 July
UK/USA Congress on Green Towns and Cities (Dartington Institute, Landscape Institute, National Association of Olmsted Parks), Liverpool. Details from the Congress Office, University of Liverpool, Dept of Civic Design, PO Box 147, Abercromby Square, Liverpool L69 3BX (051-709 6022 ext. 2522).

resources

Anglo-Saxon Architecture

This title is a new addition to the Shire Archaeology series, written by Mary and Nigel Kerr, price £1.95. It is a useful guide to a period which is difficult to study because of the scarcity of remains. Surviving evidence above ground is largely confined to stone-built churches. Archaeological remains of wooden structures often indicate only the floor plan, whose simplicity may give no clue to a more elaborate superstructure. There seems to have been a deliberate attempt to destroy examples of 'English' architecture after the Conquest, and we have only tantalising fragments to suggest the nature of interior decoration. The book analyses examples from around England in terms of form and function, materials and constructional elements, and lists sites to visit. Also new in the series is *Roman Forts in Britain* by David J. Breeze, price £1.95.

Return of the Luddites

The first in Pennine Heritage Network's series *On the trail of...* was out of print after only eight months. The second edition of *On the trail of the Luddites* is now available price £1.95 including p. & p. Also from Pennine Heritage is a *BASICS* design kit, for voluntary societies and local organisations trying to set up a design unit on a shoestring. It includes parallel motion A1 size layout pad, grid sheets for a variety of publication sizes and other essentials for only £35 including p. & p. (reduced price to those participating in the course on information techniques - see Courses section).

Sound interpretation of the past

Pennine Heritage has adopted a stereo approach to oral history by initiating a region-wide project and publishing a manual with national interest (*Remember, Remember... tape recording oral history* written by Ken Howarth). Their oral history project started at the end of November '83 with two workers (Kitty Williams, full-time, and Janet Hainsworth, part-time) appointed for twelve months. The brief was to find out what oral history work is being done in the South Pennine region, liaise and co-operate with other projects, publicise the concept of oral history and to begin a sound archive in the region. Efforts will be concentrated on

biographical tapes of elderly people rather than specific themes, for which contacts will be passed on to other relevant projects such as Bradford Heritage Recording Unit. A publication based on the research, *Pennine Past Times* is due out in the autumn. *Remember Remember...*, 68 pages, two-thirds A4, is £2.75 including p. & p. from Pennine Heritage Network, 2 The Birchcliffe Centre, Hebden Bridge HX7 8DG.

Symposium proceedings

The proceedings of the joint SIBH/GDIM London meeting on Design/ Interpretation/Computers have now been published and are available from Dr. David Uzzell at the University of Surrey, price £1.50 to members and £2 to non-members, including p. & p. The proceedings of the 1981 meeting on Evaluation of Interpretation are also still available, at the same price, from CEI; (both addresses to be found on the back page).

Guided Walks

Northamptonshire Leisure & Libraries Dept have produced a report on their 1983 Guided Walks Programme. After notes on the organisational background to the county-wide programme, led by voluntary leaders on a variety of topics, there is an analysis of subjects, timing, location and attendance figures. Since 1975 the programme has grown to between 130 and 150 walks a year, averaging 25 people on each. Forty people (including a reporter) attended a 4 a.m. Dawn Chorus Walk, and 101 a Yuletide Walk. Contact: Countryside Officer, Northants County Council, Guildhall Rd, Northampton.

National Trust leaflets

From the Devon Office come two more colour leaflets in a series grant-aided by the Countryside Commission and devoted to the Trust's open space properties in the county. They are no 16, *Killerton*, and no 17, *Ashclyst Forest*, each containing a description, map and line drawings, and selling for 20p at Trust shops. The series represents the increasing desire to interpret coast and country properties as well as stately homes.

REED Special Issue

The Council for Environmental Education have published a special issue of their Review of Environmental Education Developments, in response to the UK Conservation & Development Programme and as a tribute to their retiring President, Lord Sandford. *Environmental Education and CEE: Progress & Prospects* contains the personal views of various distinguished contributors who were asked 'Why environmental education?', and longer articles mainly by those concerned with CEE's development since its inception. Two key points to emerge are the wide diversity of interpretation put upon the term 'environmental education', and the problem of LEAs proving slow to promote it in the curriculum of secondary schools. In spite of the great increase in environmental awareness generally, as a cross-disciplinary subject it can still be viewed with suspicion and treated as being designed only for the less able. John Baines concludes that more than just steady progress is needed to promote environmental education, and that ways to increase effective action and influence should be sought. Obtainable from CEE (address on back page) price £1.50.

Sightseeing in 1982

The English Tourist Board's annual summary of findings from its survey of visits to tourist attractions is now out for 1982. Statistics on admissions, new attractions, expenditure and visitor trends include a 9% increase in visits to gardens and a 2% decrease to museums and galleries. Admissions to Southsea Castle rose by 156% as a result of the Mary Rose exhibition, and to the Yorkshire Museum by 111% for its exhibition on the Vikings in England. Price £4 from ETB, 4 Grosvenor Gardens, London SW1W 0DU.

Disabled at Acton Scott

A report on the problems and needs of wheelchair-bound visitors to the Acton Scott Working Farm Museum, compiled by a member of the Museum staff and a disabled volunteer, is available free from the County Museum Service, Wenlock Lodge, Acton Scott, Church Stretton, Shropshire, SY6 6QN. Comments are welcome.

can help, facilities for the disabled, training of conservators, environmental pollution and the damage caused by over-exposure to visitors.

For the future, I see a particular need to promote genuine co-operation between professional conservators and volunteers. Labour costs are so high in our society that, unless amateurs are involved, much conservation work will never be done. Working under the direction of skilled conservators, the properly trained volunteer can do basic uncomplicated tasks and so release the professionals for the scientific work that they alone can do.

Secretariat address: Conewood House, Crawley Ridge, Camberley, Surrey.

Pamela Cowen

The Heritage Co-ordination Group

In 1979, when chairman of NADFAS, I arranged a conference bringing together members from about 70 different heritage organisations, because I felt that the proliferation of bodies concerned with preserving our heritage needed co-ordination to avoid overlap and dispersion of effort. The following year the Heritage Co-ordination Group was founded, under the Chairmanship of Mr. Patrick Cormack MP, from the All-Party Parliamentary Committee for the Heritage. Founder members came from the British Association of Friends of Museums, Ancient Monuments Society, Cathedrals Advisory Committee, Civic Trust, Council for the Care of Churches, Georgian Group, Historic Houses Association, National Art-Collections Fund, NADFAS, National Heritage, National Trust, Museums Association, Society for the Protection of

Ancient Buildings, Victorian Society and British Tourist Authority Heritage Committee.

We aim to encourage communication between existing amenity and heritage preservation organisations, particularly among voluntary societies at a regional level; to co-ordinate activities when it is mutually advantageous and when a concerted effort is required; to prevent work in isolation which could result in unnecessary duplication or failure of a project through lack of support; and to encourage an awareness of the need for trained voluntary help, in order to preserve much of our cultural inheritance. Apart from meetings three or four times a year to exchange news, we hold annual conferences on themes relevant to current heritage problems, such as areas where volunteers

Recorded commentary - the automatic guide

Many museums and archaeological sites already use recorded commentary and taped sound equipment by Reditronics. Among them, the Science Museum, the National Museum of Wales, the Norwich Castle Museum, the Weald and Downland Museum, the Army Transport Museum, the Royal Naval Museum, the National Railway Museum, and many more - including the Manchester University Museum, which has this to say about the choice of equipment for its new Bird Gallery:

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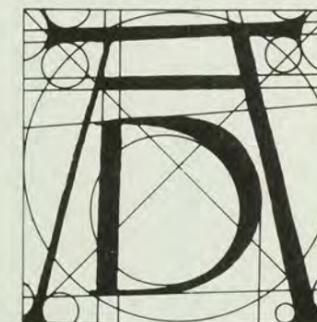
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The Society for the Interpretation of Britain's Heritage

President: The Rev. and Rt. Hon. Lord Sandford DSC.

The Society was formed in 1975 to:

- * provide a forum for discussion and exchange of ideas on the interpretation of Britain's heritage, both urban and rural;
- * disseminate knowledge of interpretive philosophy, principles and techniques;
- * promote the value and role of interpretation to those involved with recreation management, conservation, education, tourism and public relations in national and local government, charitable bodies and private organisations.

Annual subscription rates: Individual UK £7, Library £5, Corporate £20, Overseas £7 (£10 if the Journal is to be sent airmail).

Officers 1983-4

Chairman: Michael Glen (Ryeford Lodge, Stonehouse, Glos. GL10 2LA).

Vice-Chairman: Brian Lymbery (59 Ermine Rd., Ladywell, London SE13).

Secretary: Ian Parkin (4 Holmewood Close, Kenilworth, Warwicks, CV8 2JE).

Treasurer: Graeme McLearn (60 Ackers Rd., Stockton Heath, Warrington, Ches.)

Membership Secretary: Michael Quinion (12 Bakers Furlong, Burghill, Hereford, HR4 7SB).

Events Secretary: David Uzzell (Dept. of Psychology, University of Surrey, Guildford, Surrey, GU2 5XH).

Publicity Officer: Janet Cornish (Prince of Wales Committee, 6th Floor, Empire House, Mount Stuart Sq., Cardiff).

Editor: Alison Maddock (Croxtheth Country Park, Liverpool L12 0HB).

Employment wanted

First class Honours graduate (Environmental Studies/Biology) seeks employment in Interpretation/Countryside Management. Has recently drawn up interpretive plan for Exmouth in conjunction with Manchester's Centre for Environmental Interpretation. Contact: S. Hardy, 28 Stubbs Road, Pennfields, Wolverhampton, West Midlands (Tel. 0902 342292).

COPY DATE FOR NEXT ISSUE:

9th June 1984



SIBH matters

Charitable status

The Charity Commissioners have now confirmed their acceptance of our application for registration under section 4 of the Charities Act 1960. Our registration number is 288493, and in due course the Society will appear on the Central Register of Charities, which is open to public inspection.

Annual Conference, Rochester, 13th-15th April

The insert in our last issue gave details of the unavoidable last minute change of venue from Wales to Rochester, Kent. The committee regrets any disappointment caused, and thanks are due to David Uzzell for putting together an interesting programme under difficult circumstances. The weekend will give members a choice of an architectural and maritime heritage option or a countryside interpretation option. By the time this issue is published members will have received full details of costs, programme and booking. For late bookings telephone Alan Courtney on 0905-22653. The committee also regrets the clash of dates with the CRMA seminar, and will endeavour to avoid this next year.

Regional meetings

'Interpretation in Open Air Museums', Black Country Museum, Dudley, Saturday 12th May (joint with Social History Curators Group). Contact Ian Parkin, 0926 54232.

'Interpreting Historic Gardens', Claremont and Painshill, Surrey, Sunday 20th May. Contact Teige O'Brien, Painshill Park Trust, Council Offices, High St., Esher, KT10 9RR Tel. Esher 62111.

'Edinburgh in Camera', architectural heritage of Edinburgh, Friday 8th June. Contact Mrs. C. Wood, Edinburgh New Town Conservation Committee, 13a Dundas St, Edinburgh EH3 6QG, Tel. 031-556 7054.

'Interpreting the Somerset Levels', Friday 6th July. Contact Dr. Ian Burrow, Somerset Planning Dept, County Hall, Taunton, TA1 4DY, Tel. 0823 73451.

Details of the autumn meeting in West Cornwall will be in the next issue. David Uzzell is still very keen to receive members' suggestions for other regional events, and also reminds us that non-members are always very welcome at meetings.

Membership campaign

First, a welcome to the 14 new members who have recently joined us. The revised prospectus for the Society has now been produced and supplies are available from publicity secretary Janet Cornish. If members attending meetings and events where interpretation is of relevance were to pass on a few copies to the other participants, the Society's name could soon be much more widely known. Janet, together with Pat Riley, is also preparing a travelling exhibition unit on SIBH which will be used to promote the Society whenever opportunities arise.

Links with CEI . . .

The committee has been discussing a closer relationship with the Centre for Environmental Interpretation. The SIBH Chairman is to sit on the Centre's advisory committee, and pleasure has been expressed at CEI's new lease of life. Joint publications and reciprocal mailing lists are two possible practical areas of co-operation. CEI's address is John Dalton Building, Manchester Polytechnic, Chester St., Manchester M1 5GD, tel. 061-228 6171.

. . . and CEE

SIBH's membership of the Council for Environmental Education was announced in the Autumn 1982 issue. CEE provides a focal point for co-ordinating and disseminating advice on environmental education and promoting appropriate policies, in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. Its 60-odd member organisations can use it as a forum for the mutual exchange of ideas and information, and each is represented at the general assemblies where opinions can be voiced and relayed to appropriate bodies in Britain and abroad. Members also benefit from publicity through CEE, receipt of news bulletins and access to the information service. Full details are in the booklet 'A Guide for Current and Prospective Member Organisations', price 30p from CEE, School of Education, University of Reading, London Road, Reading RG1 5AQ.

ADVERTISING IN HERITAGE INTERPRETATION JOURNAL

Rates for camera-ready artwork: £0.75 per col. cm, min. 4 cm; one-third page £20, half page £30. Small-ads (personal etc) 4p per word, min. £1. Loose inserts £15 plus additional postage incurred. Further details from the editorial office.