

society for the interpretation of Britain's heritage

FAULDS UNFOLDS HIS 'FANTASY' FOR FUTURE

THE ANCIENT ASSETS THAT MAY BE
OUR SALVATION - Andrew Faulds, MP

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The presupposition in all the ardent analyses of our country's present plight (even one as acute and depressing as Alastair Buchan's in a recent article in *The Times*) has been that Britain will remain an industrial power. Too many Britons still hanker after the impact of our imperial and industrial might when around the globe peoples scurried at our order as the tributaries of empire fuelled our factories and forged the strength of our economy. The imperious word and the goods went forth.

It was not always so. There was a pre-industrial Britain, great in other things. Post-industrial Britain may face an enforced return. There is no immutable patent royal that decrees us to be car producers to the world. More than any other country we depend on imported materials to process into manufactured goods to earn our living. The demand for those resources has enormously increased. And the producer countries have woken to the economic and political power that gives them and upped their prices.

Oil is only the first of the industrial essentials to call a political tune. As the factories of China and the

Middle East, of Africa and South America and Asia begin to churn out low cost goods, Britain will be excluded from more of the markets of the world. Indeed can we even hope to retain an industrially based economy? Our activity will inexorably decline until we produce only the manufactures we need ourselves.

POLITICIANS' PANACEA

We accept too eagerly the panacea the politicians peddle: that the dark riches of those cold seas will float us home. But our oil will run out in a generation or so - and what do we do then? With dependence on an exporting economy spent, how could we earn our living? Would it not be wise to contemplate an alternative future for Britain? It may be fanciful to project a political imagination so far forward but what's wrong with the exercise?

The inevitable decline in industrial activity will force millions of our countrymen to emigrate. The island's resources are too limited to support our present numbers. Many parts of the developing world may - we pray - need those industrial skills we will then have to spare. Perhaps the coloured peoples will be more tolerant of immigration in reverse.

As our industrial structure shrinks

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NEWSLETTER THREE

SPRING 1976

the society

The Society for the Interpretation of Britain's Heritage was formed in April 1975 to provide a forum for people engaged in studying Britain's heritage and in both planning and managing interpretive programmes and facilities which relate to this heritage.

It draws its members from the wide range of organisations - including local authorities, statutory and educational bodies and major voluntary organisations - engaged in interpretation of one kind or another.

Copies of the constitution and of the consultative document which led to the formation of the Society may be obtained from the Secretary.

Officers

President: The Right Hon. The Countess of Albemarle, DBE DLitt DCL LLD
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Editor: Michael H Glen, MIPR (British Tourist Authority, 239 Old Marylebone Road, London NW1 5QT)

interpretation

The influence of Parliament rests clearly on us at this time. Our forthcoming programme for Bangor includes two notable Welsh MPs among the speakers, and our leading article in this issue of *Interpretation* is the thinking of a third eloquent member.

As we look ahead to our own talking arena in April, we can perhaps look back on the thoughts of an earlier parliamentarian.

In 1928, Mr Arthur Ponsonby, MP, wrote in *The Nation and Athenaeum*:

Art and archaeology make a far wider appeal than the more technical branches of Science if only they can

be properly interpreted. It is true the knowledge of facts is one thing, the imparting of that knowledge to others is quite another thing - an art in itself. Let us cultivate that art.

While we might not view the appeal of technical matters in the same light, we must surely agree with Mr Ponsonby's plea for the cultivation of the art of imparting knowledge.

Not only knowledge, we say, but understanding too.

Riding down to Bangor

Members have already been circulated with full details of the Society's joint Conference with the Prince of Wales' Committee at Bangor

Apart from reminding you of the dates - 9 to 11 April - and thereby encouraging you to register, it is worth noting just how varied and interesting a programme has been drawn up.

The Conference fee of £21 (plus about £3 for local transport) is excellent value and we are looking forward to seeing a good representation of members.

Our first AGM is also being held - in the midst of a flurry of talks and visits - and this is in itself our first major landmark. That we have joined forces with the Prince of Wales' Committee is an encouraging recognition by that body of the part we have to play.

Don't delay - register today - if you haven't already done so! 12 March is the deadline.

The Newsletter

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the teeming work forces of our depleted cities will move back to the market towns and villages, reviving again the activities of small community life.

And with a reduced population Britain would be self-sufficient in essential foods simply by spreading a different mix of crops on our farmlands. Indeed with a return to the land we could supply food for some small part of the rising hungers of the world.

Shudder as we may, perhaps the creation of a living history book in this clutch of islands is not so bad a prospect. For the major preoccupation of a post-industrial community may be an improvement in the quality of life rather than material well being - communal comfort and convenience rather than conspicuous consumption.

Already many millions of visitors flood in - about nine million this year - to gape and marvel at our heritage. Should we not be doing our utmost to enhance it? The land is heavy with the handiwork of our forebears. From the artifacts of excavation, through the medieval treasures of armoury and abbey, church and castle to the homes and gardens and the public buildings of the eighteenth century, and the industrial monuments of the nineteenth century, we are ripe with riches. In painting, literature and theatre we are without peer.

MUSEUMS ARE NEGLECTED

But now castle and cathedral crumble as stone flakes and falls. Market towns decline and village life fades. Development and demolition destroy thousands of habitable properties every year. Museums and art galleries which reflect the changing life and taste of our people are neglected. The depredations of modern farming methods destroy both plant and animal life.

Yet it is that great heritage which may become our livelihood. If we have to live on in a post-industrial Britain does it not make sense - for our own delight as well as the tourist economy - to invest in those assets?

It is economic nonsense to fund industrial regeneration at enormous

cost if the signs of life point the other way. Those many hundreds of millions of pounds would transform and revitalize our country's heritage. Should we not be decreeing expenditure on a whole range of projects designed to revive the life of Britain, to improve its amenities and preserve its riches?

Ancient and industrial archaeology and art galleries, churches and museums, historic houses, the theatre and British films require - and deserve - more generous budgeting if they are to be the things we trade in - and keep for our pleasure. We should be training many more curators and conservationists in wood and metal, paint and textiles. And should we not already be retaining many thousands whose industrial jobs must end in the old traditional crafts of stone-work, carpentry, tiling, hedging, ditching and a variety of other skills?

FOUL AND SLUGGISH

A restored railway system may be needed to get our visitors around: perhaps only in Britain will the railways survive. Rivers, foul and sluggish with neglect and industrial disposal, will need cleaning, not only because angling is the most popular active British sport, but our visitors may want to cast a fly or two. Landscapes raddled with centuries of industrial work and waste and urban deserts need restoring from despoliation. And we must of course conserve the complex patterns of our lovely countryside. More and better hotels will be needed to tempt the tourist and house him hospitably.

We must be far-seeing enough to accept that our future may be some such fantasy - a sort of Switzerland with monuments in place of mountains. It may be our only alternative - to provide the haven, heavy with history, for those millions of tourists from all four corners who will come seeking peace in a place away from the pulsating pressures and the grit and grievances of their own industrial societies.

The author is Labour MP for Warley, East.

CHESTER



A busful of members - and some friends - took part in the Society's second conference. An urban theme was chosen, using both town and surrounding country, and Chester was the selected location. This was due, in part, to its pride of place in, and contribution to, European Architectural Heritage Year. (How long ago EAHY seems, which is wrong, for it should still be an impetus.)

We met at the showpiece - the Heritage Centre. Here much thought, a great deal of work and not a little money had been spent on converting St Michael's Church into an interpretive centre, to provide, as a focal point, background on Chester's extensive conservation scheme.



HERITAGE CENTRE

Roger Tilley, the City's Conservation Officer, led the project. In making us welcome and explaining the development of the Centre and its purpose, he emphasised the concept of retaining as much as possible of the church's interior character. The church itself has played a part in Chester's history since the 12th Century.

Visitors are introduced to the exhibition by a static display illustrating the historical growth of the city. Then, in the chancel and vestry, they will see the large three-screen, six-projector, audio-visual programme which, by controlled lighting, includes the interesting timber ceiling.

The programme sets out to illustrate changing social patterns set against the more slowly changing physical face

of the city, and a pattern of living development is built up. While impressive in many ways, the production of a three-screen presentation makes almost insuperable demands on its design and production team.

The third part of the exhibition is a much more detailed display picking up the main points from the audio-visual programme. Specific conservation problems are shown with actual or possible solutions.

A critical analysis of the Heritage Centre must really await the Society's visit to York when a useful comparison with the Centre there may be made.

Heritage Walk

Out into the rain we then went, to test and try the heritage trail. Using the attractive booklet as our guide, augmented by Roger Tilley and colleagues, we explored much of the older part of the city, examining parish boundary plates, small conservation schemes, the curiously-named *Sedan House* (with its two-doored sedan chair porch) and the *Pied Bull* - Chester's oldest inn, sadly left unvisited!

We referred last issue to the *Year of the Town Trail*. Chester's Walk certainly held interest, was easy to follow and added a brief insight into the changing town. Its maps dealt pragmatically with problems of scale, the practitioner overcoming the purist!

Wirral Country Park

After an excellent lunch in Cheshire County Hall dining room, arranged, for unforeseen reasons, at the last minute, we set foot, or rather, wheel now, for the wilds of the Wirral Park. Our first stop was at Hadlow Road railway station, where progress had dictated there should now be no railway and so it was a station dated 'about 1952' which we examined.

It was our introduction to the Wirral Country Park, established round the 'backbone' of the disused railway, by Cheshire County Council and the Countryside Commission.

The leaflet that is available details the daily life of the railway, its

station, and the men who ran it. Brief explanations of the many facets of booking office work, of signalling and telegraphing are given.

Looking a little like a life-size model of itself, the station's fabric has been restored and much former equipment collected and re-instated. So far, little to interpret the place has been attempted. We took it as we found it, reeking of nostalgia and ripe for the next stage in a programme of interpretive provision. There is a lot more that could be done. Not everyone would agree, however, that it should be done!

THURSTASTON VISITOR CENTRE

On arrival here, we were warmly greeted, formally, by Peter Moore, Cheshire's Director of Countryside and Recreation, who had been with us up till then, and by Frank White, the Head Ranger of the Country Park. As the first of three speakers, he told us, in a direct and entertaining way, about 'his' Centre and the surrounding park.

Frank White

On this Park we do not have a special staff to look after the Visitor Centre. The information officers, who man the information desk, keep an eye on the exhibition and operate the slide show. The maintenance of the exhibition and the interpretation equipment has to be carried out by the rangers and information staff and must be fitted in with other duties. I think it is essential that all our staff understand the philosophy of interpretation and the aims and purpose of our particular interpretation programme, otherwise the maintenance becomes a chore.

Maintenance apart, rangers should play an important role in the interpretation programme and there is a double reason for their receiving some training in this important aspect. But a word of caution - rangers are usually very practical people in outlook as well as experience. They see things in basic and realistic ways. They need to be like this because highly intellectual, people might find their minds disordered by such contrasting jobs as counting glow-worms at midnight on Saturday and

rodding blocked-up Visitor Centre sewer pipes at mid-day on Sunday. So, if you confront rangers with such things as *conceptualising trip attraction* and *ensuring a tactile experience for visitors* they tend to beetle off to quiet corners of the Park where they can contemplate the majesty of nature without bothering very much about the moral dignity of man with his *primitive schemata* and they will certainly dismiss *didacticism*! (See Issue 2)

The Visitor Centre here is manned by one full-time Information Officer and three part-time assistants.

All the maintenance work is done by the rangers so that nothing remains out of action for more than a few minutes, no matter who is on duty. The estuary models and the tanks containing live specimens need the most attention. Specimens have to be changed frequently, the new ones being caught from the ponds. They must be easy to find, and easy to keep. We started off with water beetles but they were voracious feeders and needed so much attention. They were replaced by the less-interesting water boatmen which are less inclined to leave us with a dead tank.

QUICK DIAGNOSIS

Our three projectors, in constant use, are the most prone of our equipment to go wrong, and so we have two in reserve. The magic box which works the automatic slide show has proved to be a most reliable piece of equipment. Minor maintenance we do ourselves, more complicated matters are done from telephone instructions from the free-lance electronic engineer who installed it. I would stress the advantage of this sort of contact which enables a quick diagnosis to be followed by remedial instructions.

For the summer guided walks programmes we employ two ranger-interpreters for three months. They also look after the exhibition maintenance, and write the monthly newsletter. But they cannot work out a programme of walks and Saturday evening programmes without some training as well as a briefing. As we use university students, this means candidates are interviewed and

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selected in the Easter vacation, and then given a course when they arrive in July. We have been lucky to have the same two for three years running.

PUBLIC REACTION

We now get as many visitors to this Park as it can conveniently take - it has been put at half a million a year. Many thousands pass through Thurstaston Centre and it appears that more visit the exhibition and slide show than use the toilets! There must be a moral to be drawn...

The Centre is very popular with schools and in June and July, we get as many as 500 children a day. This is the most we can absorb

Many people come to the Park - and more visit Thurstaston than any other part. This is an indication of their appreciating what they find. The exhibition and slide show are well received although there are, of course, certain categories of visitor on whom we perhaps make little or no impression. These include the sunny, summer, Sunday afternoon sunbathers and football kicker-abouters, but taking the year and the Park as a whole, they are very much the minority.

How effective is the programme then? It is exceptionally rare to be told that the set-up is a waste of the ratepayer's money. It is extremely common to be told, by local people, how lucky they are to have such an asset as this Park.

LACK OF VANDALISM

The cost of vandalism this year is under £50. A combination of factors account for this appreciation and protection, and we should go on using them all until any are discovered to be a waste of time, effort and money. Interpretation is included in this, of course, and with it the cost in time and effort spent on maintenance. Because it is very difficult indeed to find the pulse of the Interpretation Programme's effectiveness, and to measure it when it is found, it must remain an act of faith - the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. 9

Dolly Pile

Next on the agenda was Dolly Pile, whose work as Interpretive Officer for Cheshire is well known.

“It was not until recently that we sat down and put down on paper what we felt was the function of interpretation here.”

With this honest foreword, Dolly introduced her talk on Interpretation in the Wirral Country Park. Her assessment of her division's work was equally self-critical.

She explained that time prevented the production of an interpretive plan for this park before they started on its interpretation.

“To begin with we want to use interpretation to explain the function of the park and how it is managed. We also want to use it as a management aid - to help prevent erosion of the cliffs by encouraging people to use the proper routes; to suggest that horse-riders keep to their own section of the Wirral Way.

We want to give the public a feeling for the special character of this park - to give them a sense of place. This means that we have first to make them aware of the park's origins as a railway - the visitor centre is approached by crossing the abandoned railway line and platform.

But we want, also, to explain what that railway meant to the people who worked on it and to those who lived near it, and explain its role today as a leisure resource and a reservoir of wildlife.

The other major element in the park's story is the Dee Estuary. It has influenced the area's history and its plant life to a considerable extent.

To communicate our messages and achieve our aims we are using a variety of media. Besides the exhibition and audio-visual programme, publications include a monthly newsletter. There are two self-guiding trails and a kind of town trail along the front at Parkgate explaining its history as a port and resort. Outdoor information boards are at main access points and a

summer interpretive programme was begun three summers ago.

THE EXHIBITION

The exhibition probably covers too many topics instead of picking from the park story the elements which displays can communicate best. The displays dealing with history and geology should have been left out and dealt with differently - the history in an a/v display and the geology in a booklet, with more emphasis given to it on the self-guiding trails.

From the conception of the slide programme we realised that it was for setting a mood and whetting the appetite. The programme we show touches very lightly on the role of a country park, the history behind this one and the range of opportunities available in the park.

OTHER PARTS OF THE COUNTY

However, the County Council is by no means the only organisation actively involved in interpretation. The Forestry Commission have a visitor centre in Delamere Forest, while the National Trust and District Councils are also starting their own projects.

Within many of the County Council's countryside recreation areas, interpretive provision is, or will be, restricted to the purely orientation dimension. In others, such as the Sandstone Trail, a 20-mile walking trail that runs north-south across the County by way of the Triassic sandstone ridge, we have gone a step further. As well as trail-side directional information display boards we have produced a leaflet which looks at the trail as a unit and compares man's use of the land on the sandstone ridge with that of the surrounding Cheshire Plain. We sell the leaflet at pubs and shops and from a dispensing machine.

Over in the east of the County in the Pennine foothills above Macclesfield is Tegg's Nose Country Park. Much of this small park is situated on an abandoned quarry site, dominated by working faces with their massive exposures of millstone grit. From the summit of Tegg's Nose there are extensive views. There will be a small centre housing only an information

kiosk and an office for a seasonal ranger interpreter. We felt that the right interpretive media to use were wayside exhibits, leaflets, guided walks and demonstrations, and we did start a programme of walks this summer. We also had demonstrations on sheep rearing in the hill country and on drystone walling. Public response was much better than anticipated.

For interpreting views from the park we are erecting three 'tables' made from local stone with a plaque of perspex or fibreglass attached to identify key features and explain a reasons for the difference in landscape types.

The other place where most of our effort has been spent in the last couple of years and where we shall be concentrating our efforts for years to come, is Tatton Park. 9

Jane Camp

Taking up this point, Assistant Interpretive Officer Jane Camp took to the rostrum to tell us of Interpretation at Tatton Park.

“Tatton Park, a stately home owned by the National Trust and maintained by Cheshire County Council, comprises Tatton Hall, the Regency home of the Egerton family, 60 acres of gardens and over 1,000 acres of parkland. Together they attract over a quarter of a million visitors each year.

In August 1975, general approval was given to a series of interpretive proposals for Tatton Park. Many of these were the result of the US National Park Service study sponsored by the Countryside Commission, others were those of our own interpretive section.

CHOICE OF THEME

With a resource of this size there was a need for extremely detailed research. However, a wealth of information was gathered, and much was discovered about the early history of Tatton. The Old Hall in the parkland was found to be the manor house of early lords of Tatton, near the razed site of the manorial village of Tatton.

This discovery of Tatton's roots and the additional luck of finding informa-
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tion about the life style in the Old Hall seemed to make the interpretive theme self-evident - *the evolution of a country estate*. So many milestones in its development, easily contrasted, suited it admirably to this theme.

Its significance is its *wholeness*, demonstrating what makes up a once self-sufficient economic unit.

Tangible evidence is essential for a story's credibility. This is relatively easy at Tatton Hall but less so in the Old Hall area and so mood-setting will start as the the visitor enters the park. A handout will outline what there is to see, and suggest the theme of evolution.

INTERPRETIVE PAVILIONS

At each focal point there will be a small interpretive pavilion, more flexible to site and use, less costly to provide than a large visitor centre.

The pavilion near Tatton Hall will orientate, will introduce the public to Tatton Park. En route from car park to house and gardens, its main medium will be an audio-visual programme in which "the appetite will be tempted with a few choice morsels".

The Old Hall pavilion will provide an introductory or 'threshold' experience for the visitor, by means of both an audio-visual programme and an exhibition, in which we hope to incorporate finds from archaeological digs. The pavilion is likely to be in an existing building. At Tatton Hall itself interpretation will continually stress the themes of evolution and 'wholeness'.

GUIDE BOOK

The existing guide book stresses the house's physical attributes, but the new one will interpret the human angle. There will be a guide for the specialist and a children's guide in sketch book style. A glossy pictorial souvenir is also planned.

The rooms in the house will be portrayed in terms of how people used them. Items will be introduced to project a more 'lived-in' atmosphere.

One room will be devoted to the social life of the family in Tatton's heyday,

which was the second half of the last century. But the servants will not be neglected. As well as the kitchen and scullery, the butler's pantry, the housekeeper's sitting room, and so on, will be opened to the public, suitably furnished.

The work and world of the outdoor servants employed in the gardens, park, stables and on the home farm will be interpreted by displays and demonstrations in and about the stables.

THE GARDENS AND PARKLAND

The gardens are a sensitive area, so interpretation will be low key. But once again the features will be explained as reflections of the family's taste and travels.

The main area of interpretation in the parkland is the Old Hall area and its

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"It'll never catch on in Golcar"



Museum interpretation is a specialised art which should never be tackled by amateurs on a shoestring budget - or so we were told when we were setting up the Colne Valley Museum five years ago.

It all started with a small group of enthusiasts planning to preserve a weaver's cottage in the Pennine township of Golcar, which in the early nineteenth century was a thriving handloom-weaving community. The cloth was made in the top-floor cottage workshops behind long rows of stone-mullioned windows. Some older residents of the Colne Valley still remember cloth being woven at home at the turn of the century.

In 1970 we decided to re-create the old way of life in a cottage that the local council had earmarked for demolition. The professional museum people didn't know what to make of it all. They said we would need about £20,000 a year, and we had little chance of raising just a tenth of that sum. Even some local people were doubtful about the wisdom of such a

venture. "It'll never catch on in Golcar" they claimed with characteristic bluntness.

But it did catch on, and in 1972 we won the first prize in the BBC *Chronicle* Industrial Archaeology Competition.

The Museum has grown considerably in the past few years. It now occupies three cottages with workshops above, and the permanent displays include a weaving workshop, a living room, and a clogmaker's workshop. The venture is still run entirely by its members, who now number almost four hundred.

In Spring 1974 someone suggested that we should dress up in nineteenth-century costume and bring all the period rooms to life for a weekend. And so in October 1974 the first *Nineteenth Century Craft Weekend* took place.

WARPING AND WEAVING

A local clogmaker agreed to come and make his clogs in our workshop. His craft has hardly changed since the last century, but at first he was doubtful whether anyone would want to watch his everyday work. Of course, all the visitors were fascinated by it. In the adjoining workshops we had a full display of old clothmaking processes. Children prepared the wool which the women spun into yarn, while the men were warping and weaving at a tremendous rate. Down below in the cottages, women and children were washing and ironing (the hard way!) and baking bread in the black-leaded range.

We had about 1,800 visitors over the weekend and decided to try to repeat the success with two more *Nineteenth Century Craft Weekends* in 1975. The average attendance has been about 2,000, so we are planning to hold two a year for as long as the demand continues. The next one will be held on the 3rd and 4th of April 1976, 10.30 a.m. - 6.00 p.m.

Colne Valley Museum is opposite the parish church of Golcar, three miles west of Huddersfield, West Yorkshire. Grid Reference O96 158. Telephone Huddersfield (0484) 843168.

J.H. Bamforth

Eagar Approach to Interpretation

METHOD: LAST OR FIRST RESORT?

...as interest in this interpretive field increases, there will be a strong temptation to lay down rules as to what constitutes good and bad technique.

Being tall, it is easier for me to be counted than to stand up. However, I wish to stand up to this challenge from Lord Montagu, in the first issue of the *Newsletter*, and to suggest a few steps for good interpretation. The issue is not whether they produce uniform results, but how frequently their performance is checked.

DEFINITION AND PRINCIPLES

By my definition, good interpretation of Britain's heritage gives the visitor a clearly memorable impression of thoughtfully selected information about a place. Visitor is used in the widest sense of someone as an *interpretee*.

Eight principles of good interpretation are:

- A It is aimed at the visitors in their language as they see it.
- B It concentrates on as few selected and compelling ideas as possible.
- C It presents the unique qualities of the place.
- D It involves the visitors, their emotion and their intelligence.
- E It is accurate and clear.
- F It clearly associates detailed information with the overall place.
- G It uses the selected medium to full advantage.
- H It leaves visitors with an enriched understanding of the place they are visiting.

STEPS TO GOOD INTERPRETATION

- 1 Responsibility for the preparation of a place's *Recreation Plan* should be clearly defined and the plan prepared. For good interpretive use, the plan should identify (a) known or probable social profile of the visitors; (b) interesting facts, especially about the uniqueness of the place, and its association and

comparison with other heritage and recreation areas; and (c) short and long-term visitor totals.

- 2 Write an *Interpretation Strategy*, which should establish *what* is to be said, but not *how* to say it. It should re-define the visitors' profile, and the unique qualities of the place, and how far they match one another. It should, giving reasons, select and concisely state the characteristics of the place that visitors will most want to learn. There should be reference to the standards by which the interpretation will be judged.
- 3 Choose the media, and design and execute the *Expression* of the *Interpretation Strategy*. Make the case for the necessary budget allocation, if not already estimated.
- 4 The proposed interpretation should be judged against the eight principles, A-H. Its interest and accuracy should, in particular, be confirmed. Responsibility for approving proposed interpretation should rest with a senior and suitably experienced person who should be familiar with the particular heritage place and the information which has been used to arrive at the proposed interpretation.
- 5 Ensure that the visitors' experience of the place meets the expectation created by its interpretive material.
- 6 Regularly re-assess the effectiveness of the interpretation, ensuring that it is doing justice to the place and to the visitors.

David M. Eagar



**martin
mere**

The Wildfowl Trust have recently opened a large waterfowl garden and wild refuge at Martin Mere, Burscough in Lancs.

To interest the general public in conservation is often difficult - to interest them in wetland conservation is that much harder.* Nevertheless, this is ultimately what we are trying to do with the visitors who come to

Martin Mere. Our interpretation programme has to be varied because of the varied nature of the people who do visit us. For example, we have the dedicated conservationists, the special ornithologist, the general public, many of whom merely come for a day out, and the educational visitor. To try to involve all these people in our interpretation plan we are going forward with two major objectives. The first of these will be our main exhibition. This is a joint venture by the Wildfowl Trust, Liverpool Polytechnic School of Graphic Design and the Countryside Commission. This main Exhibition will consist of four themes:

- 1 The Wildfowl Trust, its aims and objectives
- 2 Conservation in the North-West
- 3 Martin Mere, its past, present and future
- 4 General bird ecology

In conjunction with these four themes there is also planned a slide tape show. This is being produced jointly by the Wildfowl Trust and the Countryside Recreation Option of the Environmental Resources course within the Department of Biology at Salford University.

Our second major objective is to interpret our whole environment to the many thousands of educational visitors which Martin Mere is already attracting. In 1975 our first year of operation, we handled some 16,000 education visitors including some 500 College of Education students. We hope that in 1976 this will have increased to at least 35,000 education visitors. All of these visitors need to be placed in contact with some interpretive material about the Martin Mere environment. At present such material is being developed in the form of worksheets, workbooks, specimen kits, overhead transparencies etc. In order to achieve the right balance of material presented, close liaison is taking place between the Wildfowl Trust educational staff and local education authorities such as Lancashire and Wigan. Both of these authorities have already had teachers' workshop courses based at Martin Mere.

Brian Gadsby

*European Wetlands Campaign starts in 1976. Details from Nature Conservancy.

membership

Applications for membership of the Society are considered from anyone engaged in studies for interpretations, planning, constructing or managing interpretive facilities and services. The officers of the Society have the final decision and there is no facility for corporate or transferable membership. The current annual membership fee is £2.00.

After nearly a year, the Society's membership is approaching 200. Each issue will include a list of new members and their particular responsibilities (where known). The following members have been notified to us since the last issue:

- M ANDREWS, Yorkshire & Humberside Council for the Environment, Director.
- David ARCHER, MSc, BSc, Lancashire County Council, Management Surveyor. Countryside recreation facilities.
- A V BABIDGE, BA, AMA, Borough of Torfaen, Museum Curator; management of museum and interpretive programmes.
- M BELTCHER, British Museum (Natural History), Exhibition Officer.
- T G COLMAN
- John CORLETT
- S DAVEY, Hampshire County Museum Service, Keeper of Biology.
- Patrick Grant DAVIS
- David M EAGAR, Gwynedd County Council, Assistant County Planning Officer.
- A L F EATON (MRS)
- Rhys EDWARDS, Snowdonia National Park.
- C GOODWIN, Powysland Museum, Welshpool, Curator.
- A B GUEST, Geffrye Museum, London.
- Jill S HARRIS (MRS), BSc(Hons) Town Planning, DipTP(Dist), Mid Glamorgan County Council, Recreation and Environmental Studies Officer; Group leader recreation, minerals and waste and pollution in Mid Glamorgan.
- M B W HARRIS
- S HOPKINS (MISS)
- Andrew HUNTER, MSIA, Forth Studios Ltd, Graphic Designer (Director).
- Andrew M JENKINSON, MA(Cantab), Salop County Council Education Committee, Adult Education Tutor for Environmental Sciences.

- G TURNER LAING (MRS)
- R C MEADOWS
- P H OSWALD, Nature Conservancy Council.
- S POSTLES (MRS), Brewhouse Yard Folk Museum, Nottingham, Keeper of Social History.
- D RAGGETT (MISS)
- H R SINGLETON, Department of Museum Studies.
- Moira H STEVENSON, Cheshire County Museum.
- Peter TOWNSEND, BA, DipEd, Peak Park Joint Planning Board, Principal, Peak National Park Study Centre; Programme of National Park orientated courses.
- L M MALLAGAN WEDDERBURN

We hope to reach our '200' by the time of the AGM in Bangor. If every member enrolled one new member ...



CAMP continued from page 8

village where interpretation will be by a self-guiding trail using wayside exhibits.

There are three other main areas of interpretation. The evolution of the deer park at Tatton will be highlighted, some light will be shed on the park's formal landscaping, centring around the figure of Humphrey Repton, and finally there will be a self-guiding trail with a leaflet concerned with Tatton's animal and plant life - ecology with a historical slant.

With this phrase, apt to the whole Tatton interpretive plan, ringing in our ears, we enjoyed a lively question and answer session before returning once more to Chester.

Congratulations for an excellently organised and stimulating day go to all those involved in the arrangements, in particular to Dolly Pile, who handled the administration so well.

Directory

RURAL PLANNING SERVICES Ltd,
(Professor Wibberley and M. Biddington)
Great Haseley,
Oxford.

(John Campbell)

to the editor

TRAINING IN INTERPRETATION

In view of the proliferation of seminars, courses, and meetings concerned with the various aspect of interpretation, it now seems to be appropriate to consider some kind of co-operation to ensure the best use of limited resources and to avoid duplication of effort.

The S.I.B.H clearly has a role to play but I would suggest that for England and Wales (the position seems to be less complex in Scotland), the Countryside Commission, with its administrative backing and its grant-aiding capacity take on the role of co-ordinator. A first step might well be to undertake a survey in co-operation with the S.I.B.H to determine the future demand for training. It would seem to be reasonable to ask those organisations which are planning seminars and courses to discuss their plans with the Countryside Commission at an early stage.

G. Stansfield
University of Leicester

WORKING ALONE

Experience at recent courses and conferences suggests that I am operating in a slightly unusual position vis à vis most of those in the interpretation business in that my interest and activities in this line have grown from a post which is in the mainstream of adult education provision. I think most people recognise interpretation as an essentially educative process, but most interpreters seem to have come to the job via planning or museums or recreational management. This possibly gives my brand of interpretation a more positive educational bias, though I do not claim it to be any better for that. What I do find more of a problem is

that I am working alone in an organisation which is not otherwise concerned with interpretation, as compared say with the interpretation section of a planning department whose *raison d'être* is the provision of interpretive facilities. On the one hand I would be interested to hear from any others working on interpretation from within the education system and on the other hand I would be willing to pass on the fruits of my experience to other adult education tutors/organisers who might wish to integrate interpretive work into their educational provision.

Andrew Jenkinson, MA, Bircher Cottage,
Little Stretton, Church Stretton,
Salop SY6 6RE.

UNESCO RESCUE

Two draft international recommendations, one for the preservation of historic towns, villages and quarters, the other for the promotion of exchanges between the museums of different countries, have been submitted by Mr. Amadou-Mahtar M'Bow, Director-General of Unesco, for examination by the Member States of the Organization. These recommendations are to be adopted by the General Conference at its session in autumn 1976.

Thus new recommendations will be added to the already large international Corpus which, since 1954, has profoundly influenced national laws and regulations.

But the noteworthy thing about the preparation of the first of these two draft recommendations in particular is that the basis for it was provided by the practical experience acquired by Unesco. The instruments that the Organization is to propose for adoption by Member States are directly influenced by the safe-guarding projects in which Unesco has co-operated. In this way, the knowledge acquired in the course of operational action, the most concrete form of its action, is to be transferred to another sphere, that of normative action.

Reprinted from *World Cultural Heritage, Information Bulletin No 5*, published by UNESCO, October 1975.

take note!

As we went to press, we were pleased to read that a Ministry of Agriculture survey suggests that the days of wholesale grubbing up of hedges is over. The hedgerow position is stabilising, and the survey finds that more money will be spent by farmers on improving hedges for the benefit of wildlife. (*Wildlife Conservation in Semi-Natural Habitats on Farms*. HMSO, available soon.)

At Penmaenpool (Pwllpenmaen) on the Barmouth Estuary, in Meirionnydd District, a disused signal box has been renovated for use as an interpretive centre and bird observatory in one of several joint ventures by the Gwynedd National Park and Planning Departments. The project which has only cost about £1,000 has been undertaken mainly by fifth-formers with encouragement from the Prince of Wales' Committee. The Penmaenpool Centre will be manned principally by members of the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, with support from the National Park and the North Wales Naturalists' Trust. It opens in Spring 1976.



An illustration, by Edna Whyte, from Auchindrain, a Farming Township.

Opening this summer is an Interpretation Centre and Exhibition at 14 Locks, Rogerstone, Gwent. A joint project between Gwent County and Newport Burgh, the exhibition will describe the history and current use of the Brecknock and Abergavenny and Monmouthshire Canals.

In 1975, the Victorian river port of Morwellham, Devon, saw an increase of

over 6,000 visitors over the 1974 total. To help in the interpretation of this fascinating village, a giant 32-foot diameter water wheel now turns on the site of an old mill and a nineteenth century sheerleg crane (over 25 feet high!) is being brought to the site with the help of naval volunteers from Plymouth. The crane, probably the last surviving example of its type in the South-West, will be restored and rebuilt on the quaysides where another one stood more than 100 years ago.

In South East Wales the Borough of Torfaen (including the Eastern Valley of Gwent - Blaenavon, Pontypool and Cwmbran) has initiated a major programme of heritage interpretation through its newly established Museum Service. This will include the formation of a central museum/interpretation centre at Pontypool and responsibility for the management of several historical sites in the area, including a water balance pit headgear and a 19th Century Water Mill. A series of organised walks in the summer months and a number of way-marked trails in both urban and rural contexts are planned.

Listening Post: the development of an experimental sound guide system is being undertaken by the Countryside Commission. It is planned to install a comprehensive system for field trial this summer.

Launched by Prince Charles in November, *Youth Action 1976*, is a challenge to the young people of Wales to improve the Welsh environment. With the active support of the Prince of Wales' Committee, a steering group will encourage and assist projects in both urban and rural areas. Details from Brian Lymbery, 15 Wellfield Court, Bangor, Gwynedd.



Terry Robinson, late of Cheshire County Countryside and Recreation Division, has just started a three-year project preparing an interpretive plan for Exmoor National Park. The plan, when completed, is to be published by the Countryside Commission. It is hoped, also, that some or all of the plan can be implemented to provide a coordinated programme of facilities. ... page 14

TAKE NOTE *continued from page 13*

Valerie Thom (CC for S) left on 30 January for an eight-week working exchange with the U.S. National Parks Service. Her principal assignment is with the Interpretive Publications Section at the Harpers Ferry Centre.

The Government Select Committee on the Wealth Tax, although divided on many issues, was united in recommending that provisions (*not concessions*) should be made for 'our heritage'. It was recommended that classified buildings and woodlands should be exempted.

Interpretive Plans: the Countryside Commission commissioned a series of studies resulting in published plans. The interpretive plan for Tatton Park, Cheshire was published late last year and the series is complete now with study reports on Shipley Park, Derbyshire (see page 15) and Clumber Park, Nottinghamshire. The reports are available from the Commission, Crescent Place, Cheltenham, Glos.

We were delighted to hear from Gary Sealey, Chief of the Interpretation and Extension Division of Canada's Department of Indian and Northern Affairs. He sends best wishes to the Society which he feels has made an excellent start. He was interested to note from the newsletter that many of the points raised were also being discussed among Canadian interpreters. We heartily reciprocate corporate greetings.

More from Robin Wade Associates: Near Ironbridge the conversion of *The Coalport Potteries* into a living historical museum is due for completion this summer. The design of a new interpretive centre at Beamish is under way and the *Farm Interpretation Study* mentioned in Issue 2 is being done in conjunction with Rural Planning Services.

A teaching and interpretive 'unit' on the Isle of Purbeck will be published in April by Macmillan, for Dorset C.C. Education Department. Comprising 16 books on every aspect of Purbeck from coastal scenery to industrial archaeology, with supporting maps and

slides, the unit is aimed at both teachers and adult visitors. Details from W.O. Copland, one of the editors, 20 Hill Road, Swanage, Dorset.

During the Christmas holidays ten children 'camped' in the museum at Sudbury Hall while they acted in a film for schools about the life of a country house in the 18th and 19th centuries. In the form of a ghost story, the film has been designed to introduce the house to school parties. John Hodgson wrote the script and the production was done by Derby College of Art.

Following the plea for more information about the Countryside Recreation Management Association, Terry Stevens tells us that they have published their first two newsletters and that membership is open (£5, students £2) to 'absolutely anyone'. Forms and details from the Secretary, John Studholme, 89 Sedbergh Road, Kendal, Cumbria LA9 6BE. He will also supply details of the forthcoming conference and AGM on 1 April at Reading University. The theme is *Water and Recreation*.

Lady Birk, Under-Secretary of State at the Department of the Environment, has set up a heritage education group to continue the efforts in conservation education that were made in European Architectural Heritage Year, it was announced recently.

Last August, a successful experiment in interpretation was organised at the head of the Rhondda Valley. The aim was to combine ways of encouraging public access into difficult upland terrain with methods of interpretation. The emphasis was on *face-to-face* interpretation to get public feed-back before large scale capital investment. Land-Rover trips and guided walks were used, as well as self-guided trails. Over the bank holiday week, many thousands of visitors took part in the activities, giving much insight into their own needs and wants. Reports and details from Mrs. Jill Harris, 47 Eleanor Close, Pencoed, Mid Glamorgan.

Apologies to Frank Cottrill for misquoting his phone number, which is Winchester 65296, in the last issue.

Bookshelf

Gordon Hilker: *THE AUDIENCE AND YOU:* (U.S. National Park Service 1975).

'Like all performers the interpreters must have courage and it ain't easy.'

How true. As Director of the School of Performing Arts at the United States International University at San Diego, it has taken some courage on Hilker's behalf to promote the application of certain basic theatrical techniques to the improvement of our interpretive delivery. Equally it requires no small amount of courage on our behalf to accept, adopt, and apply these skills, many of which as Hilker himself states are simply common sense. The rational adoption of the ideas presented in this book will give readers new insight and new perspective as to the approach to and presentation of interpretive talks, lectures etc.

Hilker is not offering any revolutionary ideas but rather he presents in an easy to read, straight forward publication an aid to interpreters in a field where most of us require some assistance, that of basic dramatics. (TS)

Freeman Tilden's book, *Interpreting our Heritage*, is now available from the Landmark Bookshop, Carrbridge, Inverness-shire, Scotland. The price, including postage, is £2.00.

WHAT IS OUR HERITAGE? (HMSO for DoE, 1975. £3.50)

Lady Dartmouth, who guided British efforts in EAHY as Chairman of the UK Executive Committee, turned her energies as the year progressed to seeing that its achievements were recorded.

The result is a picture book, laced with gentle commentaries and homilies, which seeks to capture the breadth of architectural heritage we should conserve and the range of successful projects. It achieves this target attractively - though a little expensively.

It is ironic, however, that page 44 features Stonor Park in Oxfordshire,

lived in by the Camoys family since Norman times and recently renovated. It is at present on the market with many of its contents auctioned off.

SHIPLEY COUNTRY PARK: FARM INTERPRETATION PLAN (HMSO for the Countryside Commission, 1975. £2.00)

We referred in our first issue to the imminent publication of this interpretive plan, undertaken by Richard Westmacott et al for the Derbyshire County Council and the Countryside Commission.

It is a detailed study, particularly interesting for its twin aims of preparing plans for interpretation and for agricultural management, thus allowing a working farm to be the interpretive medium. In the light of Terence Lee's lecture to the Society in Stirling, the use made of his guidance on child psychology is fascinating, and adds to a piece of worthwhile reading for those even with quite unrelated interests.



Shipley
Home Farm
tile motif

BUILDING CONSERVATION IN NORTHERN IRELAND (Northern Ireland Department of the Environment. 1975. 50p)

Edited by Peter Caldwell and Hugh Dixon, this record of the EAHY Campaign in Northern Ireland illustrates the wide range of projects undertaken and accomplished. It is a tribute to those concerned that, despite all distractions, so much was achieved whilst plans and designs for use in more propitious times have been drawn up.

Apart from the four major Pilot Schemes in Armagh, Cushendall, Hillsborough and Londonderry, the range of conservation work described is varied and interesting. Examples are the restoration of the late 17th century house, The Grange in Waringston, County Down; putting in working order the 18th century Ballycopeland Windmill, Ards, County Down, and the work now in hand at Ardross House farmyard, County Armagh.

what's on ... when & where?

The dates given are those supplied to us. However, please use the contact to check beforehand, if you intend to go to any of the events.

29 Mar, *The Future of the Small Woodland*. A one-day conference for forestry, landscape and countryside departments at the Peak National Park Study Centre. Fee: £5.00. Details from: Peter Townsend, Principal, Losehill Hall, Castleton, Derbyshire S30 2WB. Tel: Hope Valley (0433) 20373/20693.

3 Apr, Aberystwyth. *Volunteer Labour in the Countryside*. Annual conference of Council for the Protection of Rural Wales. Details: C.W. Grove-White, Llanfechell, Cemaes Bay, Anglesey, Gwynedd.

3 Apr-mid May, *Destruction of the Country House*. Guildhall Museum, Leicester. (C. Owen)

9-12 Apr, U.C.N.W. Bangor: *Ecology of Coastal Recreation*. Open meeting organised by Recreation Ecology Research Group. Details from: David Eagar, Gwynedd County Planning Department. Tel: Caernarfon 4441.

For details of Hampshire Field Club and Archaeological Society's one-day conference at Avington Park, near Winchester, on 1st May 1976, and of the summer programme of field meetings, apply to the Programme Organiser, Frank Cottrill, 11 Clifton Road, Winchester SO22 5BP. Tel: Winchester 65296.

10-14 May, *Course in Interpretation*: the Countryside Commission and the Museums Association are organising a week-long course in the Lake District. The cost will be reasonable and details will be available shortly from Department of Museum Studies, University of Leicester, 152 Upper New Walk, Leicester LE1 7QA.

5-10 Jul, The Museums Association Annual Conference, Bristol. Speakers from the Countryside Commission and the English Tourist Board take part in a session on Wednesday 7 July. Further details of

the programme and enrolment fees may be obtained from the Conference Secretary, Museums Association, 87 Charlotte Street, London W1P 2BX.

12 Jul-3 Sep, *Exploring Shropshire*, a programme of guided walks almost daily, including walks in the Shropshire Hills, farm visits, town walks and history walks in the Ironbridge Gorge. Full details (by Easter) from Andrew Jenkinson, Bircher Cottage, Little Stretton, Church Stretton, Salop.

1-8 Sep *Recreation Planning and Management*. Field Studies Council course at Rhyd-y-Creuau, The Drapers' Field Centre, Betws-y-Coed, Gwynedd LL24 0HB. The Course Director is John W. Gittins. Details from A.D. Thomas, Warden.



BANGOR REMINDER

Don't miss the Bangor Conference! Speakers include Barry Jones MP (Under-Secretary of State for Wales), Prof. Harold Carter (UCW, Aberystwyth), Aled Eames (UCNW, Bangor), Dafydd Elis Tomos MP, Hywel Roberts (Snowdonia NP), Buck Buckhurst (Plas Tan-y-bwlch), Dr Douglas Bassett and Dr Tom Pritchard. Visits will be made during the weekend to Porthmadog Harbour, Ffestiniog Railway, Tan-y-bwlch, Coed-Llyn Mair Nature Reserve, Llechwedd Quarries, Gloddia Ganol Mountain Centre and Llanberis. That's far too much to miss, so register NOW with Terry Stevens, Welsh Rural Life Centre, St Fagans, Cardiff. Send £21.



Porthmadog Harbour

[Photo: BTA]