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HERITAGE INTERPRETATION

THE SOCIETY FOR THE INTERPRETATION OF BRITAIN'S HERITAGE

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Heritage interpreted: VIP tour of Edinburgh Castle at conference reception (see p.4).

In this issue

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Winners

Bosworth Battlefield (Leicestershire County Council)
Devon Books
East Fellside and Alston Moor Interpretive Strategy, East Cumbria
Hampshire's Countryside Heritage Project (Hampshire County Council)
Hugh Miller's Cottage, Cromarty (National Trust for Scotland)
'Not Worth A Sixpence' AV Programme, Old Heckling House, Irvine, Ayrshire (Netherfield Visual Productions, Irvine Development Corporation and Cunninghame District Council)
The 'Old Bushmills' Visitor Centre, Co. Antrim (Old Bushmills Distillery Company Ltd)
'A Royal Weekend Party 1898' by Madame Tussauds, Warwick Castle

Commended

The Andrew Carnegie Birthplace Museum, Dunfermline (Carnegie Dunfermline Trust)
Avoncroft Museum of Buildings: display boards and AV programme, Bromsgrove
Bonawe Iron Furnace, Taynuilt (Historic Buildings and Monuments, Scottish Development Department)
The D-Day Museum, Southsea (Portsmouth City Council)
Glyn Vivian Art Gallery and Museum Education Service (Swansea Museum Services)
Gosport Living History (The English Civil War Society, Historic Buildings Group, Living History Research Group & Gosport Borough Council)
Operation Countryside, Sale Water Park (Mersey Valley Warden Service)
Paradise Mill Silk Museum, Macclesfield (Macclesfield Sunday School Heritage Centre Trust)
Penhow Castle, Gwent (Stephen Weeks)
Queen Elizabeth Country Park (Hampshire County Council)
Stott Park Bobbin Mill (The Lake District Art Gallery and Museum Trust on behalf of English Heritage)
Sheffield Industrial Museum, Kelham Island (Sheffield City Museums)
'Vale and Downland Discovery Walks' (Oxfordshire County Council & the Ridgeway Project)
The Weald and Downland Children's Activity Book 'Look Here!' (Weald and Downland Open Air Museum, Sussex).

Carnegie Interpret Britain Awards 1985

For the culmination of the second year of our award scheme, we were privileged to be able to hold the presentation ceremony at the Royal College of Surgeons in Edinburgh. It formed the highlight of day two of the anniversary conference in September, with HRH The Duke of Gloucester doing us the great honour of presiding.

In a much appreciated address, His Royal Highness told the winners that they should be proud of their awards, because the excellence of their projects had been "identified by a team of people who really know". He was sure that the recognition would benefit both themselves and their visitors. He described how on his travels around the world he had seen many examples of heritage interpretation, not always done as well as it might have been: sometimes telling too much, and sometimes too little. His interest in the field has led him to the firm belief that presenting heritage should not just be for the small well-read minority, especially where public money is concerned. People are entitled to value for money in this area as in any other. The Duke concluded by expressing the hope that the awards scheme would continue from success to success over the years to come.

In thanking His Royal Highness, William Thomson, Carnegie Trustee and member of the National Panel, referred to the "amazing ten years" which the Society has experienced since its formation. He re-emphasised, too, the Trust's interest in promoting the involvement of volunteers and disadvantaged people in interpretive projects. SIBH Chairman Terry Lee outlined the judging process and called for an even larger number of entries next year.

After presenting certificates to the winners and commended schemes (see panel), the Duke toured the displays set up around the hall by the winning entrants and most of those receiving commendations.

When the Duke had departed, delegates were admitted for a quick look at the adjoining museum and some of its gruesome exhibits, before walking across to the splendid Upper Library in the Old College for the Awards Dinner. This enjoyable event became increasingly convivial, with the surprise addition to the delicious menu of a taste of Ireland donated by the Old Bushmills Distillery. Our after-dinner speaker was Kenneth Hudson, writer, broadcaster and consultant on museums, and administrator of the European Museum of the Year Awards. Getting under way with ease via anecdotes about a visit to a distillery and an eye-opening experience in an Otis lift, he entertained us with his gently provocative appraisal of award schemes, which we reproduce here.

HRH The Duke of Gloucester at the presentation ceremony, and touring the displays afterwards. (Photos this page and cover, White House Studios).

Officially Interesting

Kenneth Hudson

After-Dinner Address at the Awards Ceremony

I have a brother, younger than myself, who is a successful merchant banker. I take that to imply that he possesses a considerable degree of intelligence, although probably of a rather specialised kind. Now, over the years, I have noticed what to me is a remarkable difference between my brother and myself. When he goes on long car journeys between Point A and Point B, he notices things only in built-up areas. In rural areas, as he passes fields and farms and woods and rivers, he goes mentally to sleep, but the moment he reaches the outskirts of a town, he comes to life again. The countryside, for him, is a dead, perhaps regrettable interlude between the two towns. He has no idea of what is growing in the fields he passes, he is unable to distinguish one tree or one breed of cow from another, he has no idea what the man on the tractor is doing. One could fairly say that he has eyes, but does not see.

Now it so happens that, like Stephen Bayley, the Director of the Boilerhouse, the design museum at the V & A, my brother is a purely urban type, which I most certainly am not. He is blind to the details of the countryside, not because he is stupid, but because his world has not included these things. He has not trained himself to notice and to understand them, in the way that I have. Among our fellow citizens, he represents the majority, and I am nowadays in a very small minority, one of the dying breed which can recognise trees and crops at a glance.

The problem - and I think it is a problem - is partly a matter of not being willing to be interested; of saying, in effect, 'I am this kind of person and therefore my interests are confined to this type of thing'. There is no general curiosity, no feeling that everything is potentially interesting, that the world is a fascinating place. One of the most dreadful curses which can be imposed on people is the curse of respectability and convention, which permits only socially approved things to be observed, and blots out all the rest, so that they are literally not seen. And, for many people, especially Americans, even the approved sights cannot be seen with the naked, unassisted eye. They exist only through the lens of the camera, processed and sanctified.

That is why Heritage Interpretation is so important. It says, to an age which is desperately, chronically unsure of itself, 'This site, this building, has been inspected by those qualified to assess its value and officially judged to be worth seeing'. The situation reminds me of what happens on motorways, when drivers refuse to acknowledge the existence of fog until the fog signs are switched on. Foggy weather then becomes officially foggy. Ice becomes official ice.

But there is, of course, much more to it than this. With so many things clamouring and competing for one's leisure time, a fairly severe process of pruning and selection is inevitable. The question then becomes, 'Among all the places which have become real and respectable by their inclusion in handbooks, guidebooks and National Trust lists, which shall I choose? Which shall I enjoy most?' In coming to this decision, every extra mention and accolade counts. Once a novel has received the Booker Prize, it is no longer a mere novel. It is an award-winning novel and its merits, like those of the award-winning house, the award-winning television programme, and the award-winning kettle, are beyond all criticism and question.

Winning a prize is a nice feeling, especially if one knows that it is deserved, and I am all in favour of prizes and honours, as rewards for effort and enterprise and as useful publicity for something new and well done. It is only human to enjoy being appreciated, and the people running the Old Bushmills Visitor Centre are fully entitled to feel bigger and better now that they are the Award-Winning Old Bushmills Visitor Centre. A year ago they were just good, so to speak. Now they are officially good.

There is no cynicism in either my voice or my thoughts as I say this. For better or for worse, the award system is part of our way of life and one learns to come to terms with it. But I do have two worries and it would be a great comfort if you were to allow me to spell them out to you.

Cartoon by Chris Lines.

Worry One arises particularly from my experiences in helping to judge candidates for the Museum of the Year Award in this country and for the European Museum of the Year Award. I know perfectly well that the difference in merit between one museum which does get an award and another which doesn't is often very , very small and sometimes non-existent. What finally decides the point is the need, or supposed need, to achieve a balanced list - something from the North, something from the South, something industrial, something artistic, something minute, something large - and, cutting through all these considerations, the wish to discover candidates which are good examples of a desirable trend. I only wish it were possible for both the candidates and the public to be given a better idea of all the anguishing and horse-dealing that goes on when the judges meet.

Worry Two is much more serious, and it concerns the word 'heritage' itself. Until about twelve years ago, when unfortunate things started to happen to it, 'heritage' had two good, solid meanings. One was the money and property one inherited from one's parents, one's inheritance. The other was a country's values and traditions. Lawyers looked after the first, and philosophers, poets and historians after the second. And then, in the early Seventies, things started to go wrong. 'Heritage' became the whole body of things made by our ancestors, everything from palaces to steam engines and from Constables to old stone bridges. The 'English Heritage' was turned into a vast antique shop and dealers in eighteenth century furniture suddenly discovered that they had been temporarily entrusted with bits and pieces of the English Heritage, which was both flattering and excellent for trade.

We now find ourselves saddled with a meaning that is going to be exceedingly difficult to get rid of, all the more so because it straddles the Atlantic. Twenty years ago Heritage Interpretation would have sounded very odd indeed, almost like a literal translation from some foregin language or other. Nowadays the bricks-and-mortar and bric-a-brac definition of 'heritage' holds the field, which does bricks and mortar a good turn, but downgrades, if not altogether overwhelms the infinitely more important values and traditions. The market-place has won.

Please don't misunderstand me. I am wholly in sympathy with what Heritage Interpretation is doing. If I weren't, I shouldn't be here this evening. But I do so wish it were called something like *Interpretation Skills: The Society for the Interpretation of Britain's Historic Sites and Buildings.* This would leave us in no doubt that it isn't in the legal or the philosophy business, which I imagine to be the case.

Only Connect: Edinburgh 1985

Reporting by Alison Maddock and Derek Baylis

"In years to come our colleagues will bear the mark of distinction if they were privileged to have been at Edinburgh in 1985".

Terry Lee's words in the conference programme turned out to be something more than just generous hyperbole. David Uzzell and his team had put together an impressive overview of almost every aspect of interpretation today, with some telling pointers towards what the next decade may bring. And through it all ran the emerging thread of our responsibility to and involvement with all sections of the community, as so potently expressed in Michael Dower's thought-provoking key-note address on the final day. It was he who reminded us of E.M. Forster's haunting phrase "Only connect...". More of this later.

Celebrating our 10th anniversary with us, and marking an anniversary of their own, were of course the Carnegie UK Trust. The Society owes a tremendous debt of gratitude to them for their encouragement of the art of interpretation in so many ways and for the financial assistance given to SIBH, from our inauguration in 1975 to the launch of the award scheme and the 1985

> ***A gathering of the enlightened . . a who's who of interpretation in these islands.***
>
> — Timothy Colman opening the Conference

conference itself. We know of course that this is now drawing to a close as the Trust moves on to support other pioneering ventures.

In Timothy Colman's words, the conference was "final proof that the Society has passed through the enthusiasm of youth to the wisdom of maturity". Evidence of the appeal of the conference could be seen in the range of speakers and delegates, who had travelled from as far away as Lands End and Shetland (further than John O'Groats), and even New Zealand.

The conference was fittingly launched in the historic surroundings of Edinburgh Castle, where the Scottish Development Agency sponsored a reception in the presence of Michael Ancram MP, Minister for Home Affairs and the Environment at the Scottish Office, and of the Lord Provost of the City of Edinburgh. Michael Ancram told us of the work of his department and the Historic Buildings and Monuments Directorate in Scotland, and stressed his belief in the need for partnership between voluntary and statutory bodies and government in heritage preservation and presentation. Peter Carmichael of the SDA described their interest, through the planning and projects division, in such sites as New Lanark and Leith, where the sympathetic re-use of neglected industrial

> ***We may find it hard to define heritage, but we know it when we see it and we've seen it tonight.***
>
> — Terry Lee at the Edinburgh Castle reception.

buildings was paramount. "Hi-tech and heritage can be mutually supporting", he said. The SDA has also set up a Conservation Bureau to give help to those concerned with the conservation of historic buildings and objects.

Scottish interpretive projects not surprisingly featured prominently in a number of sessions: we heard among others from the Scottish Mining Museum, Bo'ness Heritage Area, Eskdalemuir Forest, and the National Trust for Scotland in several guises including Culzean. Often the theme was interpretation as one of the tools of economic regeneration. Delegates had a choice of three 'workshops' to explore and discuss local sites, and let their imagination range over the interpretive possibilities: Craigmillar Castle and the Union Canal - both close neighbours to deprived areas of housing - and Dunfermline across the water, where the heritage scheme is already well under way.

During the conference, ways of perceiving and learning received both the psychological and the educationalist's treatment. There was the usual dichotomy between those interpreters who would trust to 'gut feelings' about how to tackle the job and those who go for controlled evaluation and analysis of needs and reactions. Early on, in his opener on 'The Next Ten Years', Terry Lee challenged complacency about the health of interpretation. It was, he said, still beset by a passive model of learning. The interpreter needs to identify the 'schemata' (generic knowledge structures built up by the individual) which people bring with them through the visitor centre door, in order to extend and develop this framework for learning. The aim is more satisfying leisure experience, indeed an enhanced lifestyle.

The conference liked the word 'schema', and borrowed it light-heartedly in later discussion. Many recognised in it simply a formlisation of what they already knew: as delightfully put by Malcolm McBratney in discussing the interpretation of historic sites, "We need to concentrate on entry points to history for Joe Public, like Henry V and 1066". From Steven Griggs and Michael Alt came a summation of their work for the Natural History Museum, in a plea to forget the idea that objects speak for themselves. A much more structured and analytical approach to displays was advocated, coupled with an awareness of new ideas and of the duty to the visitor. And in the context of interpretive work with schools, the reminder from Eileen Adams to "use teachers, they know how children learn".

The scientific approach was also developed by David Uzzell, in a paper which considered the need to assess the degree to which interpretive exhibitions are cognitively stimulating, in the light of visitors' preconceived views. "We also need to find out what kind of experience the visitor is looking for". He questioned the introduction of interpretation in places where an assessment of present use indicated no interest in the site other than as a place for fresh air and exercise; but then, how can we anticipate the interests that might be generated by interpretation?

A series of papers tackled some very practical problems and areas of day-to-day concern. There were sessions on facilities for the disabled and on the use of volunteers. Conference welcomed the introductions by Anne Pearson and Elizabeth Fanshawe to the organisations which can advise on design criteria and specifications needed in the pursuit of the ideal: interpretation for all. With one in ten of us having the expectation of disablement in some form or another, it is time to take practical action. A different kind of need leads people to become volunteers. We heard about a survey by the Volunteer Centre on the extent of their use in museums, and from the British Association of Friends of Museums as to the sort of

> ***Our role is to bring to life your theories and plans.***
>
> — Rosemary Marsh on Volunteers

contribution they can make and, more importantly, how the staff should view the motives, needs and support of the volunteers. Too much organistion and a lack of perceived goals can kill enthusiasm. From Brenda Lees of the Mary Rose Trust came another side of the coin: the administrative headaches of rota management to set against the undoubted benefits of volunteer involvement.

In the session on environmental education, Marista Leishman gave us her perception of experiental encounters as a means of heritage education for the young, with personal discovery by means of 'living history' and similar activities taking the

> ***Heritage is a long line extending into the future.***
>
> — Marista Leishman on A Future for Our Past.

place of classroom-style learning. Not everyone went along with the implied writing-off of the more structured approach where appropriate, however; (activity books and worksheets *do* have their place). We heard more of the excellent work being done in the 'living history' field, from Jo Lawrie (Wiltshire) and Janet Moseley (Gwent). Eileen Adams (Royal College of Art) fascinated us by her quirky 'seeing eye', which unerringly picked out the incongruous and amusing in our town-scapes, and stimulated previously un-interested teenagers to do the same. (Her potted cultural study of urinals was memorable). Understanding of the urban environment is the aim also for Town Teacher, with its new Heritage and Urban Studies Centre in All Saints Church, Newcastle, described by David Lovie.

A heartwarming account of imaginative children's programmes started by Cathy MacFie at New Zealand's Fiordland National Park, and involvement of whole families through the activities of the Young Naturalists' Club at Culzean Country Park, were salutary reminders that *fun* is a valid and effective medium for interpretation. Cathy's nature awareness activities, for which staff have to be "trained to lose their dignity", were beautifully epitomised by a slide of a ranger demonstrating how to lasso an ant. Her aim is to find a way of

> ***We are putting children on the first rung of the conservation ladder in the hope that they will be stimulated to climb higher.***
>
> — Gordon Riddle on Culzean Young Naturalists.

extending the programme to schools, and make interpretation a recognised practice there. Gordon Riddle puts the success of the Culzean scheme down to its opportunities for total participation and involvement, coupled with a marvellous site, good publicity and staff commitment. In discussion, ways of extending opportunities of this kind to the adult population were mooted.

Are good interpreters born not made? Training was the subject of papers by Andrew Pierssene and Graham Barrow. Graham gave an account of training programmes and CEI's involvement in them. Andrew's was a reflective paper identifying some of the less obvious qualities which interpreters need: flair, a sympathy which regards the public with affection and respect, an ability to spot interconnections, a lack of dogmatism, creative imagination, and so on. The budding interpreter has to discover and appreciate the bewildering variety of public response. From the floor Tim Laker pointed out the need for training (in the broadest sense) of senior staff and policymakers, as well as the 'front line' staff of attendants, shop assistants etc.

In this first major conference on interpretation in the UK there was an appropriate reminder from Brian Lymbery that interpretation has a significant role in the economic regeneration of rundown urban areas. The talents outlined by Andrew Pierssene are especially crucial where a high proportion of the community is disadvantaged or socially deprived, through unemployment, lack of opportunities or that descent into hopelessness which

> ***A hybrid tea won't ramble however good the training.***
>
> — Andrew Pierssene on Training.

typifies much of the urban scene today. Papers from Jacqui Stearn (Camley Street Natural Park), Ted Jackson (Merseyside), Frank Rowntree (South Yorkshire) and Ian Parkin (on his experiences in the north west) showed what can be achieved.

The economic facts of life mean that interpretive projects often have to take a hard commercial line to stay in business. There were three bracing and highly individual accounts of interpretation in this context, bringing us some invaluable confidential insights into their businesses, by Michael Roberts (Bunratty Castle/ Shannon Development), James Fairlie (Glenturret Distillery) and Cairns Boston (Lands End). The opportunities for interpretive development in the public sector were discussed in papers from Ian Solly of Nottinghamshire (enthusiastically), Duncan Campbell of the Forestry Commission (cautiously optimistic) and Malcolm McBratney, who told us of English Heritage's revitalised outlook and image; all in a session appropriately chaired by Terry Stevens of Cadw.

The main theme of interpretation for all returned on the final morning with an eloquent address by Michael Dower. Catching us at an introspective moment the night before, (the Society's name again coming under discussion), he had expressed

> ***We seem to be in danger of going down a nit-picking semantic tube.***
>
> — Gordon Lyall during discussion of the words Heritage Interpretation.

his fear that SIBH was becoming too provider-oriented and not thinking widely enough about the public we serve. Now he expanded on his theme, reminding conference that there was really no difference between leisure needs and other needs. One quarter of Britain's population, especially in the north and the cities, lacks opportunity to fulfil personal aspirations and skills, in terms of jobs, housing, income, mobility or other circumstances. They are disenfranchised from the leisured society; they cannot 'connect'. Without the chance for self-realisation there is a bitter effect on morale. No-one should think that unemployment or disability are forms of enforced leisure - they are not the same thing at all. We cannot cure the plight of the socially and economically underprivileged, but we should consider our responsibilities to them, meeting *their* needs not our own as providers. He advocated a move to participation, to person-to-person contact. His summing up: provide not only for people with a developed cognitive structure but help people towards affective realisation. As providers, teachers, interpreters, we must be concerned with all people and with the attainment of life satisfaction.

It is hoped at a later date to assemble as many as possible of the conference papers in a separate publication.

Delegate's View

The new password seems to be *participation,* demonstrated ably by a number of excellent presentations, although denied to the delegates by the seeming relentless pressure of keeping to the time schedule.

The term *interpretation* encountered yet another (yawn) semantic, even dismissive, onslaught; it pulled through though and the awkward status quo will survive.

There seemed to be a programming trend that took us from academic conceptualisations on day one, through (some) vivid presentations addressing the present 'state of the art', and climaxing on Sunday morning with ideas that put emphasis firmly on our social responsibility. The message was to recognise our audience and consult it fully so as to evolve plans that complement local aspirations and needs.

Whilst I don't want to appear biased in my appraisal of the earlier emphasis, things did become a little strained when a psychological strategy was adopted to outwit the vast throng of Burma Veterans (our fellow conference facility-users) in competition for lunch!

The general standard of presentations was high and met my expectations. However, it seems odd that a society devoted to communication and presentation techniques singularly failed at the outset in meeting the challenge of lecturing mechanics..... (The faulty projector was fortunately remedied later).

Edinburgh must surely offer the most exciting venue for a major conference like this. What a wonderful prospect to one day be invited to help visitors appreciate the

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New Town, or Leith Docks, or Portobello, let alone The Grassmarket and Cowgate; upon reflection, though, I'm glad none of us have been allowed to get our hands on these places, they're wonderful just as they are.

The whole mammoth event was valuable, and I would endorse its biennial repetition: there seems to be a need in societies like SIBH to create these cornerstones, and cast a new die in the light of accumulated experience.

May the ship sail on, and may the sailing fraternity grow also.

Doug Gleave

A number of delegates were invited to submit their opinions on the conference. Only Derek Baylis, whose report is incorporated above, and Doug Gleave, did so. Were the rest satisfied, bored, reticent or indeed overcome, by it all? We hope the latter. Some specific points were, however, raised in a letter received from Alice Bondi, unfortunately too long to reproduce here. While enjoying the conference as a whole, she has criticisms to make about the inclusion of a Christian grace at the Awards Dinner, the lack of special facilities for the disabled or of crêche facilities for mothers, and what she sees as sexist remarks by speakers (e.g. use of the expression 'man-hours', or assumptions made about the sex of the listener). We would be very glad to have the views of other members, in particular from anyone deterred from attending by the absence of the above facilities.

Living History at Aberdour

At Aberdour Castle the sounds of troubadours and minstrels were heard again when the children from the primary schools of Dalgety Bay, Aberdour and Kinghorn joined together there in a mediaeval pageant.

Courtly clothes were in evidence and the simpler wear of those who tended the hawks, the doo's (staple diet for the winter months) and the horses. Together with the gardeners and the kitchen staff, all joined in a stately minuet, moving rhythmically across the grass, the castle their backdrop and the viol and recorders their accompaniment.

Teachers testified to five weeks' work in the learning of lines, the making of models and of costume - and parents that their ingenuity had been tested to the full. For teachers and children alike, however, Friday May 17th at the Castle was the climax and any person dull enough to live in the 20th century did not intrude.

Mr and Mrs Michael Bagenal are the creators of this annual spell amongst primary children in Fife. With the support of the Arts in Fife they have worked on properties in the care of the National Trust for Scotland at Culross and at Falkland Palace; and this year the project was worked co-operatively with the Historic Buildings and Monuments.

Marista Leishman
NTS Education Adviser

Overseas Study Competition

Reporting on an aspect of heritage education or interpretation overseas: a challenge to educationalists and interpreters

The Civic Trust Heritage Education Group is breaking new ground in collaborating with the British Travel Educational Trust to sponsor a competition to study an aspect of heritage education or interpretation in a country overseas.

Applicants should put forward proposals for a period of overseas study (no more than five or six weeks) to enable them to produce a report on any aspect of heritage education which would benefit, and be of relevance for, current practice in the United Kingdom.

Proposals might relate to an examination of heritage education or interpretation (or of one particular aspect) in a specific region, national park or historic centre in North America or India, for example. Another example might be a study of practical conservation projects for young people in France, especially on historic monuments.

The closing date for submission of study proposals is 17 January, 1986. Full details are available from Brian Lymbery, Civic Trust Heritage Education Group, 17 Carlton House Terrace, London SW1Y 5AW.

Tourist Geology

Hugh Prudden
Yeovil College

A geologist's-eye view of the interpretation of geology, first published in **Geology Today** *and reproduced here with their permission at the suggestion of Terry Stevens.*

Last summer my wife and I spent three days in the Parc Naturel Regional des Volcans D'Auvergne. This was a casual visit during a three week holiday in France. We were new to the area and to the products of recent volcanism. Fortunately, the French have an extensive network of tourist information offices, and the local *syndicat d'initiative* directed us to the interpretation centre at Montloisier, where we found a slightly overwhelming display of photographs, text and rocks.

The sun shone and the volcanic cones and crater lakes beckoned; this was neither the time nor the place to work through the panels setting out 'World Volcanic Activity' and 'Plate Tectonics'. Anyway the bookstall stocked copies of *Volcanologie de la Chaîne des Puys* (G. Camus et al, 1983) which would hopefully guide us. This publication is a splendid introduction to many geological aspects of the area, and includes what must be one of the most stunning geological maps ever produced, with its splendid portrayal of the volcanic cones and lava flows.

Outside in the sunshine we dithered. The book contained no select list of places to visit, although much of the information was useful. We confronted the classic dilemma of the geological wayfarer: we needed the advice of someone with local knowledge. It is curious that museums and tourist centres often provide general accounts of the geology of an area and yet do not suggest specific sites to visit. Cheaply duplicated sheets are needed, which would direct the visitor to accessible and non-sensitive localities. It is true that geological trails with excellent booklets are appearing, but there is a wider need for a quick reference source similar to the *Good Pub Guide.*

When we eventually climbed up one of the volcanic cones we soon discovered that there was a great variety of hand specimens, and that the exhibits at the interpretation centre had not really prepared us for the encounter. Surely it would be but a morning's work for a lad to nip round the local quarries and set up a pick 'n' mix selection in tubs with plastic bags and paper strips for making one's own labels. The visitor would be encouraged to handle, collect, describe and compare the evidence for past events.

Visitors to the Continent should seek out a copy of *Geology and Landscape in Britain and Western Europe* (D. John et al, 1983). This is a narrative guide to various parts of Europe, including the Auvergne. It is somewhat confusing to use in the field but, nonetheless, led us to Puy de Tartaret near Murols, with its easily accessible quarry displaying a section through the volcano. A quick glance at the section soon made it clear that volcanoes are not quite so easy to interpret as one might suppose. Therefore we had to start looking and thinking for ourselves, and the memory of that half-hour outlives many a guided tour. Face to face encounters are the foundation upon which we build up mental images, and the writer, as a teacher, feels that interpretation centres could do far more to encourage amateurs and novices to explore and think for themselves. We need simple field sheets which suggest elementary tasks such as description, comparison, inference of relationships and collecting (where permissible). The reverse side of the sheet could provide a brief interpretation of the features as a check-list of answers. This kind of simple field sheet could help overcome the nervousness which many amateurs experience in the field, and direct them to points of interest.

The previous year we visited the Lias on the edge of the Black Forest in Southern Germany, where we met a man from Mainz who was pathetically looking for fossils at a well-known site. The frustration of not finding any museum-quality fossils may well have killed his enthusiasm. We see the same frustration on every visit to Charmouth. There is a need to open the eyes of the novice to 'background' features which are so often taken for granted; joint patterns, sediment size, sorting and roundness, colour and thickness variations, cleavage, trace fossils and so forth. Our friend from Mainz needed to have these features of interest pointed out at the site. Instead, a solemn board illustrated the stratigraphical table and 'Typical Jurassic Fossils' which were not necessarily to be found at that exposure. Surely field sites and supporting material should concentrate on the living rock - we spend quite enough time with our heads buried in books.

Interpretation centres and museums have a double role. Firstly, they can alert the visitor to the geological highlights of a region and kindle a desire to explore for oneself. Secondly, and surely a function best kept separate, they can provide detailed reference material for the visitor who has worked over the rocks and has questions to ask. This separation of functions would free exhibitors of their obsessive desire to overload their exhibitions. Most visitors to museums flit from object to object and their needs are best met with large simple photographs, models or specimens and a minimum of text. A good example of this is the display illustrating the development of castles at Pendennis Castle near Falmouth, which has a compelling simplicity and effectiveness.

Perhaps the most worrying feature of many exhibits, guide-books and even guided field visits is that they are boring: dioramas of 'Life in Jurassic Seas', historical narratives of geological events, reconstructed dinosaurs, Redfern's TV spectacular *Making of a Continent*. These historical and geographical syntheses can only have real meaning if the individual has first looked at the evidence of the rocks. We each construct our own personal mental pictures. Why not let the visitors try to work out for themselves a sequence of events from a series of photographs, or, construct their own mental diorama from a collection of rock samples and fossils. It is at this stage that the expert can offer guidance - watch any Open University geology programme. Facts for facts' sake are just junk in the mind. It is the process of observation and thought that is important. Why should the research assistant reconstructing the Jurassic seascape have all the fun, whilst the visitors spend more time watching an audio-visual display than they spend at the rock face?

Statistics show that the small amount of geology taught in schools is declining still further. Perhaps the Association of Teachers of Geology should take heart that adult interest in geology, including tourist activity, *is* being fostered. Channel 4 has, I gather, plans for a series of programmes, and not before time. The Dorset Heritage Coast project has opened a centre at Charmouth, and new exhibitions are on the way at the Geological Museum in South Kensington. Let us hope that each of these initiatives will convey the fascination of the humblest lump of rock and point the way towards study in the field and the literature. Cramming facts can be left to schools and universities.

Driving Ahead with Wheels

The new *Wheels* display at the National Motor Museum, Beaulieu, is a production typifying the 'showman's' approach of many of today's commercially-minded independent museums. It was opened by the Prince of Wales in June, marking the centenary of the motor car's origins back in 1885-6.

Born from a growing conviction that visitors are rarely able to derive for themselves the true significance of museum objects displayed in the traditional out-of-context manner, it is intended to form an entertaining interpretive background to the museum collection itself.

The slogan of *Wheels* is 'Live the legend of the motor car'. The exhibition consists mainly of a series of 20-odd tableaux or display areas providing a 'theme adventure' into the social history of motoring. Space-age pods transport the visitor past the sight and sound landmarks, from the early days of frightening the horses, through peacetime and wartime roles, to today's fiercely competitive market and on into a fantasy of the future.

Each pod has a solid-state hi-fi system so passengers can hear the voice-synthesised commentary and digitally-recorded sound-track without any distraction. The displays incorporate robotics technology and the latest computer-controlled AV techniques to bring the scenes to life and put the motor car into its proper social context. Some of the technology employed is thought to be a world first. *Wheels* also uses temperature change and smells to heighten the sensations.

Ten years in the planning, the project was under the overall control of Beaulieu technical and educational staff throughout. Over 40 specialist subcontractors were used, and Robin Wade Design Consultants are responsible for the main displays. £500,000 was received from the chief sponsor, Kenning Motor Group, with money also from the Ford Motor Company and grant-aid from the English Tourist Board; (Ford-originated exhibits are interspersed with the principal sets).

Early motor car in its social context: bringing the pleasures of touring to the leisured classes.

Technical background

Creation of the displays has required employment of a variety of engineering, technical and electronic systems. Throughout development, emphasis has been put on provision of high quality, heavy duty systems, to ensure consistent functioning 364 days a year. Although such aspects of the display have absorbed some 60% of the £1.25m budget, it is intended that they should not impinge on the visitors' awareness of the displays.

Wheels had to be located below the main museum floor. This in itself imposed certain constraints upon the design of the display area, not least because of the presence of some 30 pillars supporting the upper floor. It was necessary to pierce the concrete floor slab to install nine motor pits for the driving motors for the ride. These had to be in locations that avoided the large concrete base pads of the pillars. The pits were excavated larger than required through the existing floor into the water table. New pits were cast in one complete waterproof box and the edge of this box sealed to the existing floor slab with waterproof concrete. The existing services, including electricity, telephone, heating and cold water, were all re-routed to make way for the new display.

British manufacturers were unable to produce a people-carrying transportation system and only one British company contacted was prepared to develop such a system, which would have been costly and time-consuming and also, of course, unproven. After looking at other systems abroad, it was decided that the equipment produced by Heinrich Mack of Waldkirch, West Germany, would be the most suitable. This equipment had been tested and used in their own leisure park at Rust. However, the pods or seats manufactured for their own ride were unsuitable for Beaulieu's requirements. Beaulieu's own design went through many stages, taking into account such features as the viewing angle, the blinkered sides, a pod that would be easy to enter and leave safely, of pleasing design, be comfortable to sit in for the duration of the ride, have room for internal sound speakers and at the same time adapt to the manufacturer's base units. This was achieved by making both small size and full size models, before arriving at the final shape. The pods hold two adults and one child and can turn through 270 degrees.

The preferred riding speed is 0.3 metres per second, with a ride time of 6.75 minutes. The ride comprises 74 chassis on which are mounted 37 pods. The alternate spaces can be fitted with additional pods, and the speed of the ride increased, if demand exceeds the current maximum daily admission of 9,000.

Requirements of the Health and Safety Executive, the local Fire Authority and the building regulations experts have been built into the overall plan. They include ramped ceilings wherever the ride passes beneath ceiling-mounted obstacles, steel emergency escape platforms, emergency fire exits specially installed for the purpose, and an artificially intelligent fire escape lighting system which sets up escape routes by illuminating emergency lights carrying arrows pointing in the required direction. An emergency sound system with battery back-up automatically instructs the public of the evacuation procedure they must adopt. The ride is covered throughout with television surveillance equipment.

Some 15 miles of wire were needed for the electrical installation, which included wiring for the sound system, television cameras, special lighting effects, ventilation system, ride control equipment and other specialist circuitry.

Four basic sound systems are used in the ride, including the emergency one. Each pod has its own narrative, using the first application of a new system designed by Electrosonic. The commentary sound is digitally recorded on 'chips', allowing good quality voice reproduction with no background noise. The sound output is controlled by micro-processor equipment - a solid-state system with no moving parts so there is no ongoing maintenance problem. The system automatically copes with ride speed changing, and each of 24 separate audio sequences are stored, to be played in each pod at the appropriate moment. An infrared beam is deflected by a mirror on every third pod to begin a sequence of three start times for the next section.

Background music originates from 16-track tape machines working in tandem, giving a different sound mix throughout the display areas. The musical soundtrack was commissioned specially for *Wheels*. Special sound effects emanate from Mackenzie message repeaters and digital sound stores. These give point source sound effects, as required.

The filmed sequences used throughout the ride have been transferred to laser disc, with the appropriate section of film being transferred by laser disc players to TV monitors for repeated plays as each scene comes into view.

Pod-sharing Prince Charles and Lord Montagu at the opening of 'Wheels'. (Photos: National Motor Museum).

Wheels will inevitably invite comparison with Jorvik Viking Centre and its time-cars. In a review for AIM *(AIM Bulletin* August 1985), Kenneth Hudson found it technically better, less claustrophobic and less confusing (though admitting that this sort of 'experience' was not for him). In terms of both technical innovation and novelty of experience *Wheels* should create a lot of interest, and help the Motor Museum attract both new and repeat audiences from far afield.

Rutland Waterlines

The quest for new uses for redundant churches is a problem familiar in many of our towns. But the rising waters of the new reservoir at Empingham created the unique difficulty of a church which would be isolated and partly submerged.

Construction of Anglian Water's Rutland Water - now laying claim to be Europe's largest man-made lake with its 3100-acre surface area - began in 1971. A notable landmark at the south east corner of the flooded valley is Normanton Tower, the former St. Matthew's Church, now opened as the UK's first Water Museum.

Looking unexpectedly like a city church, it now presents the curious appearance of a moored ship, its floor raised almost to the windows, shored up by a bank and reached along a causeway. St. Matthew's was rebuilt by Sir Gilbert Heathcote in 1764, and had its tower and portico added in 1826. There was further rebuilding in 1911, but in the 1920s the Normanton Manor estate to which it belonged was split up and the Hall demolished. In use until the advent of the reservoir, the church was then deconsecrated and emptied.

Voluntary effort was immediately mobilised into a Trust to safeguard the church. Ideas included removing the building on rollers, jacking it up, or rebuilding it elsewhere. In the end the least expensive and most practicable solution, worked out in conjunction with the water authority, was to raise the floor level by two metres, proof the masonry against damp and raise a bank to protect from wave action. This was completed by 1978.

In 1983 the Oundle Division of Anglian Water assumed responsibility for Rutland Water, and decided to use the church to create a museum illustrating the history of the water industry, appropriately situated on the shores of one of its greatest achievements.

Opened in June 1985, the Normanton Church Water Museum combines illustration and artefacts to follow the development UK water industry, from total reliance on natural processes and manual labour to its present highly automated technology. For centuries there was little progress beyond the Roman level of technology, until the industrial revolution brought far-reaching changes in collection, treatment and distribution of water and sewage, and in land drainage and flood prevention. The displays also aim to give visitors a greater appreciation of the industry's importance in improving the health of the nation through providing reliable supplies of water and high standards of sewage treatment.

The Museum is situated just off the A606 between Oakham and Stamford, and is open daily from April to October and then weekends only. There is floodlighting at night.

Reservoirs today of course cannot get away with shutting out the public and discouraging all recreational activities. Rutland Water has trout fishing (including a fishing lodge and tackle shop), sailing, canoeing, cycle hire, with the inevitable toilets, car parks, picnic sites, information centre and leaflets.

It also has an important 350-acre nature reserve, managed by the Leicestershire and Rutland Trust for Nature Conservation. 1985 saw the opening of the Trust's purpose built Visitor Centre near Lyndon. As Geoff Stansfield says, "the chronicle of the Trust's negotiations, plans and fund-raising for the Visitor Centre could fill a book... but all who have been involved with the project are delighted with the result".

The exhibition has been designed by Robert Meadows, who previously worked on exhibitions for the Durham Trust's Centre at Bowlees and the Windermere Steamboat Museum. It tells the story of the development of the nature reserve, how it is managed and why it is so important for wildfowl. Seasonal displays of birds, participatory exhibits and regular updating are planned. Volunteers will be crucial in manning the Centre, but admission and sales income may eventually help to provide an additional member of staff for its management.

Addresses: Reservoir Manager, Whitwell, Oakham, Leics, tel. 078086-321. LRTNC, 1 West Street, Leicester LE1 6UU, Tel: 0533 553904.

Normanton Tower Water Museum, the former St. Matthew's Church.

First report for English Heritage

The first annual report of English Heritage was published in October and is available price £4 from English Heritage Stores, Building 1, Victoria Road, South Ruislip, Middlesex HA4 0NZ.

English Heritage (The Historic Buildings and Monuments Commission for England) was launched in April 1984, to take over most of the heritage functions previously belonging to the Department of the Environment. These include managing some 400 monuments and buildings, advising the Secretary of State, and grant-aiding other conservation bodies and archaeological projects. In particular, it has the task of presenting monuments and buildings to the public in a more interesting and informative way.

In January 1985 new and comprehensive proposals were published for Stonehenge, and received widespread approval. They involve closing the A344 and siting an improved visitor centre nearly a mile away from the monument. In this way the rich archaeological landscape around Stonehenge will be enhanced; and visitors will approach it on foot by the ancient ceremonial route. Negotiations are well advanced to secure the land for the visitor centre.

New proposals have also been published for improvements at Maiden Castle, Dorset, and major improvement schemes are being developed for Dover Castle, Kenilworth Castle, Chiswick House, Battle Abbey and Scarborough Castle. An agreement has been reached in principle to take over from the Department of the Environment the management of Osborne House on the Isle of Wight.

The three London historic houses at Kenwood, Rangers House, Blackheath and Marble Hill, Twickenham will all come to English Heritage when the GLC disappears. The popular open-air concerts at Kenwood will continue.

English Heritage has been successful in keeping the GLC's conservation teams in being. The GLC Historic Buildings Division will be transferred intact to English Heritage, and the financial support for London archaeology will continue.

In 1985 Bushmead Priory, Ravensdowne Barracks and Galshot Castle have been opened to the public, following extensive restoration programmes, and several more sites will open in 1986. Over four million people visited the monuments, and many pageants, plays and concerts were organised at them. The English Heritage membership scheme, which was launched in April 1984, has recruited over 40,000 members.

In the last year £17.7 million was paid in grants for building conservation, including churches, secular buildings and environmental schemes in conservation areas. Some £5.5 million went to support over 300 rescue archaeology projects.

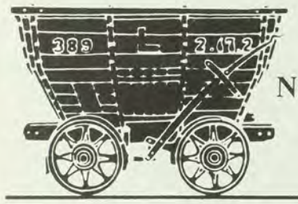
The first phase of the Accelerated Listed Building Resurvey which began in 1982 has been completed. In all, there are now over 360,000 listed buildings of all types. And over 1,000 buildings at risk have been 'spot-listed' since 1982. In 1984 historic gardens were listed for the first time on the publication of the first Gardens Registers. Though listing does not yet have statutory force, it is an important initiative in encouraging planners to protect the heritage.

Scheduling vulnerable archaeological sites, to protect them from irreversible damage from developers, agriculture or metal detector users is to be accelerated, with the target of protecting about 60,000 such sites throughout England. Several prosecutions and legal actions were undertaken to protect scheduled monuments in 1984-85, and more will follow.

In the report the Chairman, Lord Montagu, promised that English Heritage would continue its tough policies in protecting listed buildings and scheduled archaeological sites. But, he warned, the conservation movement can no longer just assume that the rightness of its case is self-evident:

> 'That case will have to be defended and argued afresh in the future - if we are not to see the pendulum swing back towards destruction and vandalism in the name of progress . . . We and other conservation bodies are all defending the same territory against those who would drive a bulldozer through what is left of England's built heritage'.

Stories Behind the Symbols -2



North of England Open Air Museum
BEAMISH

A century or so ago the 'chaldron' wagon was probably the commonest single item to be seen on the coal-mining landscape of the North East, carrying coal from the mines to the rivers or ports, for export down the coast to London. By 1863 the Stockton and Darlington Railway itself had more than 26,000.

When Beamish was first being planned we had difficulty in finding a suitable symbol which would indicate the all-round content of this regional open air museum. Material ranging from steam locomotives to ploughs, from dental drills to ducks, from cows to coal mines is understandably difficult to typify in one logo.

In 1966 the Sunday Times published a colour magazine article on the new subject of industrial archaeology and from this came our choice. Ian Yeoman, who took the colour photographs, used several of our north eastern subjects and one was a chaldron wagon then still standing at Seaham Harbour and due to be collected for Beamish.

That photograph provided the inspiration: the wagon is an interesting shape and it could be thought of as a link between the horse and the steam engine (i.e. rural and industrial life), and it is particularly north eastern.

The original drawing based on the photograph has never been turned into an over-symplified logo, since part of its attraction lies in its detailing and near-realism.

Frank Atkinson

Word Power

Acronyms Anonymous

Earlier in the year the Museums Association passed on to SIBH the following query from the Editor of Collins English Dictionaries:

'We are currently revising the Collins English Dictionary and it has been suggested that we include an entry for **interpretation centre,** an example of which, we understand, is to be set up at Maiden Castle. It would be of great help to us in framing a definition for this term if you could indicate whether or not it is in common use in the museums field and supply a rough résumé of the functions of such a centre.

'We would be grateful if you could deal with a further two related questions: 1) An alternative title **interpretive centre** has been brought to our attention; is this equally current? 2) Is the term **interpretation consultant** the standard title for a person who works in an interpretation centre?'

Ian Parkin replied on our behalf:

'**Interpretation** is a subject of growing significance in Britain. It was originally developed in America and was particularly related to the growth of the American National Park Service. The prime introductory text on the principles and practice of interpretation was written by an American called Freeman Tilden and entitled *Interpreting our Heritage.* He defines interpretation as 'an educational activity which aims to reveal meanings and relationships through the use of original objects, by first hand experience and by illustrative media rather than simply to communicate factual information'. Interpretation, therefore, is the art of communicating in such a way that a person gains greater understanding and appreciation of the subject being explained. It is particularly used in museums, countryside, heritage and other leisure facilities, and in wider environmental matters.

'The process of planning for 'interpretive' provision would normally include an assessment of the stories or themes to be explained, consideration of the audience to whom these stories are to be told, and where the 'process' should take place. A synthesis of all of these factors would then be taken into account in determining the 'media', or particular method to be used to most effectively tell the stories. This may include the 'face to face' contact with a guide, or ranger, a leaflet or booklet, a tape/slide presentation, an exhibition or museum display, a theatrical production, a guided walk or a self guided trail.

'If a number of these media are brought together in a building to help visitors understand and appreciate a country park or historic site, then that building may be called a **visitor centre, interpretive centre or interpretation centre.** Perhaps the most commonly used terms are visitor or interpretive centre: only the Nature Conservancy Council of the national bodies involved in the subject uses the word interpretation in this way and also talks of **interpretative** displays/literature etc. The majority of participants in the field use the word **interpretive.**

'A consultant in the 'field' would normally be known as an interpretive, or interpretation, consultant. He would not normally work in an interpretive centre but rather would provide professional advice rather like an architect or solicitor to providers of interpretation - whether they be local authorities, voluntary organisations or commercial leisure companies.

'A person working in a visitor or interpretive centre may be known as a ranger or warden, an information assistant, an education officer etc, depending on the type of job that person carries out. A centre may include not only an interpretive exhibition and audio-visual display, but also a classroom/meeting room, a retail sales outlet, a refreshment area together with offices, messroom and storage areas'.

The Editor's response:

'Your explanation of interpretation and all that is involved in planning and running an interpretive centre is most helpful and interesting and will certainly enable us to define this particular development in the sense of the word interpretation. We shall probably also consider an entry for interpretive centre or visitor centre based on the information you provide'.

We brought you CEE, CECTAL and HCG (among others) in previous issues. Now by special request we give you: ACTAC.

The Association of Community Technical Aid Centres was formed in 1983 to co-ordinate the work of these centres, which are the environmental equivalent of law centres. They provide professional advice to people not catered for by existing services, or unable to afford normal fees, about how to improve their environment. Services vary from chartered surveying, landscape architecture and planning aid, to environmental education and a range of management support. Constitution, control and funding arrangements also vary between the different organisations. ACTAC brings together the disparate groups in a forum for sharing experience and exerting collective pressure for recognition and financial support.

Last April ACTAC published a National Directory of Community and Technical Aid Centres, *Working with Local Communities,* price £5. It includes notes on the aims, services and fees of a variety of national and regional bodies, such as the Ecological Parks Trust, Groundwork, Streetwork, the Rural Preservation Association (now Landlife), and many community regeneration and advice agencies. The directory shows the breadth of work being done in the field - too much to detail here - and can be obtained from ACTAC, New Enterprise Workshops, South West Brunswick Dock, Liverpool L3 4AR, Tel: 051-708 7607.

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book reviews

Interpreting the heritage of the Settle-Carlisle railway line

Report prepared by the Centre for Environmental Interpretation, published by the Countryside Commission 1985, A4, 40pp, 17 illustrations, price £4.75 (from Publications Despatch Dept, 19/23 Albert Road, Manchester, M19 2EQ). ISBN 0 86170 129 1.

For a great many people, simply mention the Settle-Carlisle railway and it brings a lump to the throat. That must be a great start for anyone wishing to interpret the story of the line. It is probably the most emotionally-charged railway route in the country and its interpretive potential is immense.

The recent report prepared for the Countryside Commission could have been as innovative and dynamic as the railway route itself, and it is therefore disappointing to find that the proposals do not break new ground.

The seven interpretive routes suggested by the report are: i) more popular leaflets and publications including visitors' guides, theme booklets, popular timetables and teachers' packs; ii) self-guided trails; iii) special events; iv) expanded Dales Rail service; v) on-board interpretation (maps, observation car, commentary, mobile display); vi) tourist station and visitor centre at Garsdale; vii) interpretation at Appleby and Settle (display panels, interpretive plaques and photographs).

Most operational private railways already provide this level of interpretation. One would expect that railway interpretation would use these ideas as a foundation and then develop new, exciting ways of encouraging and involving visitors in the story. There are enough people who are ready to throw brickbats (or ballast) at the idea of retaining and interpreting the Settle-Carlisle route, and it could be argued that the proposals therefore play safe. But is that the role of interpretation?

Ammunition for the critics there is in the report. Many of the statistics relate to private railway operations in the late 1970s and visitor figures for Appleby date from almost a decade ago. The costings for interpretive provision, too, are somewhat suspect. Publication revenue implies no distribution costs or retail mark-up, and just how many panels, plaques and displays can you get for £1000?

The general greyness of the proposals is reflected in the illustrations which are flat and fail to give justice to the majestic quality of the line and the dramatic Pennine landscape.

The special nature of the line is acknowledged by all, not least by British Rail itself. The report certainly highlights the heritage and educational value of the line. The themes identified in the report are well chosen and from them an exciting storyline could be developed.

It just seems a pity that the interpretive techniques proposed are not more dynamic. The Settle-Carlisle railway became a legend in its lifetime - surely it deserves the most exciting interpretation possible?

Bill Breakell

Museums are for people

Published by HMSO for the Scottish Museums Council, 99pp, 69 black and white photographs, price £5.00. ISBN 0 11 492430 9.

The proliferation of conferences and seminars means that it is now almost impossible to attend all those which are of interest. The Scottish Museums Council is therefore to be commended and congratulated for publishing the papers from its 1984 conference 'Museums are for people' in such a handsome format.

The Council may perhaps be forgiven for the rather overstated claim on the cover that it 'breaks new ground for those working in museums'. It is certainly the first time that such a conference has been held in Scotland but only a few of the papers cover topics which have not been dealt with in part at least, elsewhere. For example, the 1984 Museums Association conference in Guernsey on the theme 'Museums and the public' (the Proceedings of which have recently been published), covers much the same ground, with Kenneth Hudson speaking at both conferences.

Kenneth Hudson's introductory paper draws largely on his *Good Museums Guide* (1982). He has probably done more than anyone to focus attention on what constitutes a good museum (or good interpretation for that matter), but there is little here that is new. Victor Middleton's paper 'Vistor expectations in museums' draws some general conclusions as to what visitors might expect from museums from British Tourist Authority and English Tourist Board surveys. The findings are fairly predictable and I personally would have preferred to read an account of a specific study rather than an overview of a number of surveys. George Thompson's 'The social significance of folk museums' outlines the development of the Ulster Folk Museum and describes how the museum has attempted to show that all sections of the community *do* have a common heritage and that this might be used to help bring about some reconciliation.

Neil Cossons, one of the most controversial and persuasive of speakers, puts forward a case in his paper for a more market orientated approach by museums, a theme which he further develops in the recent issue of the *Transactions of the Museum Professionals Group*, no 21, 'Admission charges at National Museums'.

The papers which I personally found most interesting are by Deborah Haase and Campbell McMurray. Deborah Haase, under the title 'Making a museum work', describes how she revitalised a rather moribund museum and succeeded in providing a service tailored to the needs of the local community. Campbell Murray outlines his plans for the Scottish Maritime Museum at Irvine. His interesting paper loses some of its impact when he discloses that the projected visitor numbers for the early years will be only 10-20,000.

Ian Grant Cumming's paper 'The press that museums deserve' covers ground that has been covered many times before (including at an SIBH seminar). It stands repetition, however, in that many museums take little heed of his advice. Perhaps the most stimulating paper is that by Ian McKenzie Smith, Director of the Aberdeen Art Gallery and Museum, which describes how the museum has employed writers and craftsmen in residence and workshops for adults and children as well as a travelling gallery to reach the community. The final paper by Allan Stewart MP attempts to look into the future and considers the new Bill which will combine the Royal Scottish Museum and the National Museum of Antiquities in Edinburgh under a single Board of Trustees to form the Museum of Scotland.

This is an attractive and reasonably priced publication. There are minor irritations in the lack of standardisation of references, and in the use of some inappropriate photographs and some curious captions. The question arises as to whether such papers are best published in a separate publication of this kind or whether they would achieve wider circulation in a journal. The Scottish Museums Council is clearly determined to establish its own identity and this publication will certainly serve to enhance its image and help fly the flag for Scotland.

G. Stansfield

Living History: A Guide to Reconstructing the Past with Children

by John Fairclough and Patrick Redsell, published by English Heritage 1985, A4 card cover, 36pp, 12 photos, price £1.25 at sites or £1.50 from English Heritage, ES 06/85, PO Box 43, Ruislip, Middx, HA4 0XW. ISBN 1 85074 073 9.

The title of this publication really is not fair. To publish case studies of living history projects at two sites in Suffolk, however excellent and informative, and imply that the work is a manual on the subject for teachers looks like jumping the gun in no uncertain way.

Living History is the first in a series planned by English Heritage's Education Service, entitled 'Education on site' and aimed at "providing teachers with practical information to help them make fuller use of the educational potential of our historic landscape". It surely would have been better to include a wider survey of the many sites around the country where living history activities take place, each with their own particular problems and opportunities, and summarise the various possible approaches.

In fact *Living History* is wholly given over to describing activities at Heveningham Hall and Orford Castle. Let it be said that it does this in a most useful and stimulating way. The authors write clearly and concisely about the practical considerations, planning, preparation and management of dramatic reconstructions with school parties on special day visits. Activities appropriate to the chosen dates and localities were devised (respectively 1790 for Heveningham and 1173 for Orford), and local teachers and others with special skills were employed to see them through. Children were divided into manageable groups and knew in advance what their roles would be. Actors were used in certain key parts and helped to direct the events of the day.

The booklet details preparatory classwork and also provides samples of the preparation material, instructions for costume-making, and a list of suppliers. Photographs of the schemes in action have unfortunately not reproduced well.

The quality of experience achieved in Suffolk sounds impressive. As far as possible, the rule was to remove all evidence of the 20th century. This meant that work had to be done with original or replica period tools (made specially if necessary), water had to be drawn from the well and food prepared to old recipes (with admirable back-up from the school meals service); only unmodernised areas could be used, staff cars were hidden away, and modern signs covered with sacking. At Heveningham Hall the entire NT shop housed in the old dairy was cleared each day and then reinstated in time for 2 o'clock opening to the public. In how many other places could this be done? Those of us operating sites on a daily all-day public opening schedule, and relying on such modern methods as TV surveillance and two-way radios, will be disheartened at the thought of such perfectionism. Indeed, the practicalities of letting children loose in historic rooms and allowing them to operate original equipment raise problems for the site owners which are not touched upon; (how did they prevent spillages on priceless carpets for instance?).

Many health and safety questions are begged too: some of the activities sound potentially hazardous but this is not discussed. And did they really manage to confine visits to the toilet to a fixed out-of-role lunch break? Some idea of the costs of laying on the schemes would have been helpful as well.

I would question that the publication is as teacher-oriented as appears to have been intended. The schemes featured seem to have as their starting point an available site and an idea of what activities will best fit in there, rather than a classroom topic which leads to the search for a site to expand and bring it to life. This potential lack of relevance to the curriculum may make the activities on offer of less value, and so less attractive to teachers than they might have been.

What works in one place will not necessarily do so in another, and teachers elsewhere in the country may feel that the Suffolk projects cannot be related to their own needs. Which brings us back to the point that the publication would have done better to widen its terms of reference, building on the Suffolk experiences, drawing conclusions from them, but going on to list or summarise schemes elsewhere and suggest general guidelines. There is a short reading list with references to a few other examples, but there are obvious omissions; (none of the articles SIBH has carried over the years are mentioned).

Nevertheless, at a time when there is such widespread enthusiasm for the educational and interpretive advantages of living history reconstructions, this work will be welcomed. It will undoubtedly serve to stimulate more joint ventures of the kind between teachers and the owners and managers of historic sites.

Alison Maddock

in brief

The Countryside Commission have instituted a new campaign, 'Watch over the National Parks', to promote better understanding and protection of the Parks. It is aimed alike at policymakers, business interests, national and local voluntary bodies, landowners, local communities, the media and the visiting public. The variety of issues affecting the parks and those who live, work in and enjoy them, are set out in a recent edition of *National Parks Today*. For details of promotional material connected with the campaign, contact Watch over the National Parks, John Dower House, Crescent Place, Cheltenham, Glos. GL50 3RA, tel. 0242 521381.

In the 1984 Come to Britain Awards announced this summer, special awards for private enterprise of charitable or non-profitmaking status went to Jorvik Viking Centre and the Mary Rose Exhibition & Ship Hall. Public enterprise awards went to the Cabinet War Rooms and the D-Day Museum.

The House of Commons Environment Committee is to turn its attention to the operation of the planning appeals system including public enquiries into major development proposals, and then carry out an enquiry into historic buildings and ancient monuments.

'Tomorrow is too late' is the catchphrase of the Royal Society for Nature Conservation's British Wildlife Appeal. Launched in October on behalf of the County Conservation Trusts, it is a response to the unprecedented amount of habitat-rich land presently on the market. £10m is the fund-raising aim: about £4m for purchase, £4m for maintenance, and £2m for interpretation and other activities to increase public awareness.

The Landscape Research Group is administering the 'Nature Experience Research Programme', with research funds to be dispensed in the UK and USA. Grants are to be given for research, studies or other initiatives which consider the relationships between people and the landscape, particularly those which address themselves to the natural components of the environment, the role of nature in the maintenance of health, to environmental perception and cognition, or responses to and interaction with the environment. Applications for 1986 had to be in by late September: details reached us too late for inclusion in our summer issue. More details from Mrs Carys Swanwick, Dale Cottage, The Dale, Eyam, Nr. Sheffield S30 1QU. Tel: 0433 30936.

The National Trust is resisting proposals by English Heritage to carry out archaeological excavation at the Bronze Age Castlerigg Stone Circle in the Lake District. The site is owned by the Trust but managed under a Deed of Guardianship by the Historic Buildings and Monuments Commission for England, who feel that digging will reveal evidence to help interpret the circle. The Trust doubt that much would be learned and wish to avoid disturbance and retain the mystery of this atmospheric site.

The Information Centre at Housesteads on the Roman Wall reopened in May. Burned down last year by vandals, it was rebuilt in just under a year. The Centre includes a new display tracing the history of the National Trust's Hadrian's Wall Estate through the ages.

As always intended, the William Curtis Ecological Park is to disappear now that this part of London's South Bank is being redeveloped, after 8 years demonstrating an interim low-cost community use of a temporarily vacant inner city site. The experience gained in urban ecology and conservation will be put to use in the larger Rotherhithe Ecological Park, to emerge next year at the Surrey Docks, on land provided by the London Development Corporation.

'Treasures of the Earth' is the first major permanent exhibition opened at the Geological Museum since its merger with the British Museum (Natural History). It relates geology to everyday life by linking the earth's natural resources of raw materials to the end products and processes vital to human life in the modern world. Working models and touchable exhibits are included. Specially developed auto-responsive interactive displays are also a feature, using microcomputers linked to laser discs, and responding according to the degree of interest shown by different types of user.

resources

Bosworth commemoration
Leicestershire County Council have published a Tudor Heritage Trail leaflet as part of the quincentenary celebrations of the Battle of Bosworth. It was conceived and written by the Countryside Section of the County Planning Department, and designed and illustrated by Bryony Design. The full colour, fold-out sheet has maps and sketches of two motoring routes around Leicestershire and Rutland, and one walk around the town of Leicester. Price 25p from Countryside Section, Department of Planning and Transportation, County Hall, Glenfield, Leicester. Tel. 0533 871313.

Greening the Tories
This paper, subtitled 'Conservatives and Conservation' has been written by Andrew Sullivan and published by the Centre for Policy Studies. It is an attempt from within the Tory party to increase the priority and change the direction of Government policies on the environment, including a recommendation for a radical review of the 1981 Wildlife & Countryside Act and a package of tax reforms. Price £3.90 from CPS, 8 Wilfred Street, London SW1E 6PL. Tel. 01-828 1176.

From the Countryside Commission
A substantially revised edition of *Audio-visual media in countryside interpretation* by Philip Eden is available price £4. Among new publications are *Interpreting the heritage of the Settle-Carlisle railway line,* CCP 192, (see book reviews), and *A step in the right direction: The marketing of circular walks,* CCP 195. The latter is a joint publication with the Sports Council and East Sussex County Council, price £5. It gives information on design, routing, publicity, access, maintenance etc. From the Publications Despatch Dept., 19/23 Albert Road, Manchester M19 2EQ. Tel. 061-224 6287 (full catalogue available).

Culzean review
To mark 40 years of restoration and presentation, the National Trust for Scotland has produced a booklet on *Culzean, the continuing challenge.* With 300,000 visitors per year, Culzean Castle and Country Park is the most popular NTS or NT property in the United Kingdom. The booklet describes its history, planning and personnel since its acceptance without endowment in 1945; including the search for financial stability, the links with the USA through the Eisenhower guest flat, the Castle restoration, and the development of the Country Park.

Disabled handbook
Don't be put off by the title of *Arts for Everyone,* written by Anne Pearson for CUKT and the Centre on Environment for the Handicapped. Its subtitle 'Guidance on provision for disabled people' can be read as applicable to all sorts of interpretive situations, not just museums, galleries or theatres. Full of invaluable practical advice, technical data, specifications, addresses etc., it is available price £6 plus p. & p. from CEH, 126 Albert Street, London NW1 7NF. A4 softback, ISBN 0 903976 15 3.

Handy Leaflet
The Centre for Environmental Interpretation (Manchester Polytechnic, John Dalton Building, Chester Street, Manchester M1 5GD) have a useful little fold-out introductory leaflet called *The Nature of Interpretation.* It describes concisely the meaning of interpretation, its benefits, techniques and principles, as well as summarising the role of CEI itself.

picture point

Short and to the point: but where is the ivy? Alas, the other plants have smothered it. One of several such curt statement posts on the nature trail at Dorsington Manor.

Rangers' Law
There's a revised edition now available of the excellent handbook *Law of the Countryside* by Charles Parkes. Primarily for rangers and wardens, it can actually prove invaluable to anyone with security among their responsibilities, covering theft, criminal damage, game, firearms, litter and the Wildlife & Countryside Act in a clear and helpful form. Price £3.50 from the Association of Countryside Rangers, 2 Causeway Cottages, Middleton, Saxmundham, Suffolk IP17 3NH.

courses & conferences

CC denotes Countryside Commission-sponsored course.

13-17 January
Organisation of events (CC), techniques of planning, management and promotion of activities in country parks and similar areas. Capel Manor Institute, Bullsmoor Lane, Waltham Cross, Herts EN7 5HR, Tel. 0992 24502.

17-26 January
Countryside Interpretation (CC), basic principles and techniques, with practical exercises. Peak National Park Study Centre, Losehill Hall, Castleton, Derbys S30 2WB. Tel. 0433 20373.

3-7 February
Countryside Management and Recreation (CC), Losehill Hall, see above.

17-21 February
Talking in Public for countryside staff (CC), skills needed for talks, guided walks etc. Losehill Hall, see above.

16-21 March
Society for the History of Natural History Jubilee Symposium: the presentation of natural history, past, present and future, British Museum (Natural History), London. Details from Mr. P. Davis, Conference Secretary, Hancock Museum, Newcastle-upon-Tyne NE2 4PT.

17-21 March
Local Communities and the Environment (CC, for Rangers), ways of stimulating and capitalising on local involvement in 'urban countryside'. Capel Manor Institute, see above.

17-22 March
Working with Volunteers (CC), how to recruit, motivate and manage. Losehill Hall, see above.

2-4 April
Interpretive Planning in Country Parks (CC), for staff with responsibility for preparation and implementation of management plans. CEI course at Mold, Clwyd. Centre for Environmental Interpretation, Manchester Polytechnic, John Dalton Building, Chester Street, Manchester M1 5GD. Tel. 061-228 6171.

At the time of going to press, details of our own 1986 AGM and Annual Conference (March/April) are not available.

Regional meetings in the pipeline include Farm Tours (late May), joint meeting with the RTPI in Winchester (June) and a site meeting with English Heritage to explore ways of improving interpretive provision. Details from Tim Laker (address on back page), tel. 0705 595040.

COPY DATE FOR NEXT ISSUE:
February 10th 1986

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: Ordinary UK £9, Library £6, Corporate £25, Student £5, Overseas £9 (£12 airmail).

Officers 1985-6

Chairman: Terry Lee (Dept. of Psychology, University of Surrey, Guildford, Surrey GU2 5XH).

Vice-Chairman (ascending): Ian Parkin (4 Holmewood Close, Kenilworth, Warwicks CV8 2JE).

Vice-Chairman (descending): Brian Lymbery (59 Ermine Road, Ladywell, London SE13 7JJ).

Secretary: Bill Lanning (10 Priory Crescent, Lewes, East Sussex BN7 1HP).

Treasurer: Graeme McLearie (19 Pepper Street, Lymm, Cheshire WA13 0JG).

Membership Secretary: Andrew Jenkinson (Bircher Cottage, Little Stretton, Shropshire SY6 6RE).

Events Secretary: Tim Laker (Queen Elizabeth Country Park, Gravel Hill, Horndean, Nr. Portsmouth, Hants. PO8 0QE).

Publicity Officer: Janet Cornish (Prince of Wales Committee, 6th Floor, Empire House, Mount Stuart. Sq., Cardiff CF1 6DN).

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

Publications Secretary: Bill Breakell (Bo'ness Heritage Trust, Bo'ness Station, Union St., Bo'ness, West Lothian EH51 0AD).

SIBH matters

Core funding

At the end of August we heard with disappointment that the Department of the Environment had turned down our request for core-funding. This money would have helped us to run the Society more efficiently, by the employment of a general secretary, as well as opening up opportunities for more activities to promote interpretation and interpretive techniques. As we go to press discussions are taking place on future strategy for the Society, including the search for alternative sources of financial support.

Membership

We are very pleased that Andrew Jenkinson has agreed to be co-opted onto the committee to serve as Membership Secretary. In view of the need to improve our funding, we are looking for a substantial increase in membership over the coming period. Enclosed with this issue you should find a copy of the prospectus and application form. Please use it to try and persuade a colleague or other contact to join, or bring it to the attention of any organisation you think might become a corporate subscriber. Among recent new members we welcome Derry Leisure and Amenities, the Suffolk Trust for Nature Conservation, the Scottish Development Agency and West Yorkshire Transport Museum. It is very heartening to see the diversity of interests brought together here. Note: Arrangements for payment by covenant are in preparation.

Publications

Bill Breakell has stocks of *Helping the Stones to Speak* (interpretation of churches), and the SIBH symposia on *Evaluation* and *Design/ Interpretation/Computers.* Contact him at the address on the left, tel. 0506 825855.

1986 Award entries

Forms for 1986 Interpret Britain Award entrants should be going out with this issue, the closing date being 30th April. it is hoped to make presentations to the winners in Wales at the end of November 1986. Judging will be completed by mid-September. Additional forms can be obtained from Ian Parkin or Janet Cornish (see panel).

Other news

Terry Robinson gave a paper about the Society at the First World Congress on Heritage Presentation and Interpretation at Banff, Canada, in October. SIBH and CEI are among those interested in encouraging a Second World Congress to take place in the UK.

The committee has agreed that the Membership List can be made available to outside interests at a cost of £15 for one use.

Members' Moves

Michael Glen has left the Countryside Commission, where he was Head of Communications for three years, to run his own consultancy, Western Approaches. A former Chairman of SIBH, Michael has worked for 25 years in broadcasting, information services, tourism, training, conservation and corporate relations. He leaves the Countryside Commission after the successful launch of its 'Watch over the National Parks' campaign, and he was also responsible for the recently introduced 'Access Charter'. Succeeding him at the Commission is Calvin Pugsley, formerly head of public relations for the Welsh Development Agency. Western Approaches provides communications services including public and media relations, design and presentation advice and interpretive schemes. Address: Ryeford Lodge, Stonehouse, Glos., GL10 2LA. Tel: 045382-4235.

Clive Gordon has resigned from his post as Assistant Director of Leisure Services (Countryside) with Nottinghamshire County Council to join Center Parcs Ltd., where he will be involved in the establishment of the UK operation for this Dutch company and in the development of Bungalow Parks around the country.

Jon Hall, Consultant Designer, has opened a new office at 9 Abbey Square, Chester CH1 2HU, tel. 0244 45422.

Peter Middleton MRTPI, formerly with Merseyside County Council, has joined Leisure & Recreation Consultants to establish and manage a Northern Office for the Company at 361 Royal Liver Building, Pier Head, Liverpool L3 1JH, tel. 051-227 3252.

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