HERITAGE INTERPRETATION

THE SOCIETY FOR THE INTERPRETATION OF BRITAIN'S HERITAGE

Log floaters, River Orvie 1890 *(see page 3)*

ISSUE 35: INTERPRETATION IN SCOTLAND

Issue 35 of our Journal has been produced in Scotland with a Scottish emphasis. It should be interesting reading for all, North and South of the Border, and certainly shows that there is plenty going on up here. As with previous issues, the content has been dependent on the response of members in sending in material, and our thanks go to all that did. It does not, therefore, attempt to give a detailed description of all interpretation in Scotland, but rather shows some of the things that are happening.

This issue brings yet more changes to Heritage Interpretation. The Editor, John Holder, has had to resign for family reasons, and Vice-Chairman and past Editor Ruth Tillyard has taken over at short notice until a new Editor is elected. So, apologies if you received this late, especially as the copy date almost exactly coincided with the due date for her second daughter! Thank-you, John, for a job well done, and good luck to his successor.

This issue will be read by a record number of people, as membership of the Society is at an all-time high (over 400). The Chairman is, as ever, seeking to hear from anyone who would be interested in contributing to the running of the Society, in whatever capacity.

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THE EDINBURGH CASTLE FEASIBILITY STUDY

Ruth Tillyard

In January 1985, the Secretary of State for Scotland commissioned the Boys Jarvis Partnership (a firm of architects with a specialism in historic buildings) and associates to undertake a study of the visitor services and facilities at Edinburgh Castle and to make recommendations for their improvement. The main concern of the Scottish Development Department, Ancient Monuments section, was to make the visitors' experience better, rather than go all-out for increased numbers. The numbers are around 1 million per year, and have been fairly static for some time.

The consultants' report was submitted last February, and offers four alternative schemes ranging in cost from £3.9m to £10.7m. The major problem they had to deal with was a great lack of basic visitor facilities (for example, many visitors are dismayed that they cannot even get a cup of tea having trudged all the way up the hill) and similar lack of space amongst the competing uses of the SDD, the Army, the National War Memorial and so on.

Leaving aside the interpretive proposals for a moment, their preferred solution is to find the much-needed space outside the castle proper, by means of excavating the Esplanade that slopes up to the Gatehouse. If it is levelled from the bottom, the height of a whole storey can be provided at the top, into which can be fitted visitor reception facilities, an auditorium, shops, restaurants and so on, at the same time providing an arena for events with seating that could be built up on for the annual Tattoo. A roadway would run round the perimeter, for deliveries, shuttle buses etc. The illustration shows the colonnade behind which are the reception areas, the levelled esplanade with seating, and to the right, the catering outlets. The view of the Castle as a whole is unimpeded, and enhanced by the total lack of car parking on the Esplanade.

The interpretive element of the consultancy consisted of Ruth Tillyard and Michael Glen, with input also from Michael Quinion and David Uzzell. The brief requested us not to carry out detailed subject research, but to make proposals for the Castle's better interpretation, including commenting on the themes already identified by the SDD. In addition, we were asked to carry out a visitor survey to determine who the visitors were, what their expectations and perceptions were, what they were most interested in etc. The information we collected was used by the whole team to help formulate the major proposals described above.

It was the philosophy of the consultants as a whole that any Disneyworld-like attractions were inappropraite, therefore the proposals for improved interpretation were fairly straightforward, and the same in each of the final options. They included a list of themes and their priorities, the refurbishment of the Palace Block so that it has the feel of a Royal Palace instead of the great mixture of rooms it now has, the more impressive display of the Crown Jewels with additional "contexting" displays, additional displays in the arcaded basements known as the French Prisions telling a lot of the story of the Castle community, providing safe access to the oldest part of the Castle, David's Tower, concealed within the curved wall above the gatehouse in the illustration, consolidating and improving the various military museums, rerouting visitors in some areas, and numerous other facilities and services, many of which no doubt will be provided in time whatever happens to the major building proposals. An exciting proposal was to make Mons Meg (a cannon and one of the chief attractions at present) the centrepiece of a multi-media show dealing with seiges and artillery. It was described as a bit of "Thunder and Lightning" that would give visitors an additional memorable experience as well as providing a counter-attraction to the Royal Palace and Crown jewels which are overcrowded much of the time.

The consultants' report was released for public consultation in July, and was well-circulated and discussed. The period of public consultation is now over and the results are being assessed within the Scottish Development Department. A report is due to be made to the Secretary of State for Scotland within the next few weeks, and its contents made public shortly thereafter. The final decision will be made by the Secretary of State.

The illustration appears on the back cover

PIPES AND PEEVIES:

Towards a Scottish Forest Heritage Centre
David Hayes

A heavy bombing raid on the city of London in 1940 left wooden water pipes exposed beneath shattered foundations. The pipes were marked with initials J.P.G. They had been bored at Rothiemurchus in c.1780, floated down the Spey and shipped from Garmouth to the Thames.

The story of the Strathspey pipe boring industry could be made of great interest to visitors. Wooden water pipes like those used in London can still be found. Estate records describe the operation of the Abernethy mill in such detail that it would be feasible to make an accurate model of the machinery. Other aspects of the history of Scottish Forestry would be of equal interest.

Many items that could help tell this story have unfortunately disappeared. Only thirty years ago Sime's mill at Carrbridge had fifteen portable steam engines. These have all been scrapped. Similarly once familar pit saws, horse draw bogies, chain saws, log floating pikes, cant hooks or peevies and other forestry tools and machinery are now hard to come by.

It is planned over the next two years to set up an open air Forest Heritage Park at the Landmark Centre, Carrbridge. The aim of the Park will be to tell the story of Scottish Forestry from the early eighteenth century to the present day. It will be an exciting place to visit, with an operational steam powered sawmill, and a sixty foot high fire tower from which people will be able to see out across ten thousand acres of planted and naturally regenerated pine woodland. Visitors will be encouraged to try their hand at using two man cross cut saws or working a pit saw. There will be entertaining exhibitions on: the development of saws and the felling of timber; log floating and other means of extraction; milling; historical uses for timber; propagation and management. How the story is told will depend on what is available.

For several centuries the way in which trees were felled changed little. Axes and cross cut saws were the only tools available. The development of the chain saw over the last forty years enormously increased the speed with which trees can be felled.

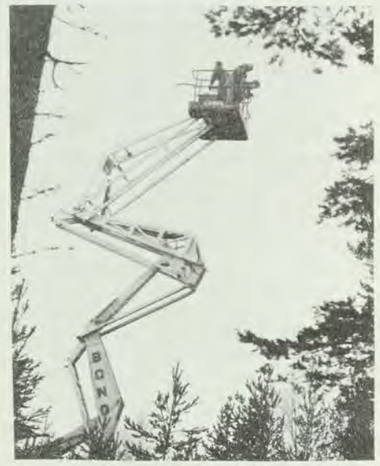
Methods of timber extraction have likewise changed radically. Throughout the eighteenth and most of the nineteenth centuries logs were floated down the rivers Spey, Dee, Cannich, Glass and Tay. Sawn timber was sent down river on rafts made up of: 'two or three branders of spars on the bottom, joined end to end, with iron or other loops and a rope through them, and conducted by two men, one at each end who have a seat and an oar'. In the spring with the rivers in spate there were free floats when as many as 20,000 logs at one time would be floated down to the sea. The men in charge of the log floating on the Spey came from Ballindalloch. They used to stay in the 'Floaters Bothy' at Inverdruie and 'after a hard day's work lay down in their wet clothes — for they had been perhaps hours in the river — each man's feet to the fire, each man's plaid round his chest, a circle of wearied bodies half stupified with whisky, enveloped in a cloud of steam and smoke, all sleeping soundly till morning'. Log floating ceased towards the end of the nineteenth century.

The coming of the railway offered an alternative means of transport. There was also great pressure against floating from salmon fishermen. Sporting tenants objected to the sudden spates of coloured water that ocurred when the sluices of log floating dams were opened. A float of 20,000 logs passing through a beat would have also caused some consternation. Logs were also extracted by narrow gauge railway. In the first world war foresters constructed a railway from Glenmore to the main line and with the aid of a small steam engine took out 400,000 cubic feet of timber. Other railways were made out of round logs butted together on which ran horse drawn bogies with cup shaped wheels.

Most early sawmills were water powered, though a windmill drove the 36 sawmills at Kingston on Spey. With the development of steam power, sawmills became more mobile. A mill would be set up in the wood that was to be felled, boards would be cut, bothies built for the men and stabling for the horses.

Pine, oak and birch once had more varied uses than they do today. Over 300 ships, some of up to a thousand tons, were built at Kingston on Spey from Scots Pine floated down from the forests of Abernethy, Rothiemurchus and Glenmore. The trade in pine railway sleepers and pit props used to be very substantial. Birch was much sought after for making staves for herring barrels. Unlike the resinous pine its wood did not taint the fish. Birch was also used for making bobbins for the Spinning Industry. Until quite recently besoms of birch twigs were in demand by the steel industry. Oak was extensively coppiced in the west and its wood used to make charcoal for the iron furnaces of Bonawe and Furnace. The charcoal was also ground up with salt petre and sulphur to make gunpowder. Oak bark was once a valuable commodity. It was stripped off the felled trees, dried, and then despatched to tanning mills. There it was ground into small pieces before being soaked in water to extract the tannin.

North American involvement in Scottish Forestry has been considerable. The Canadians cut down extensive tracks of Scots Pine forest in both world wars. They were officially in the army and were paid very much less than the civilian Newfoundlanders. German and Italian prisoners of war were also involved. They felled woods near Tomintoul and Carrbridge living in bothies well away from any camp.



Testing height of proposed forestry fire tower at Landmark

Scottish Forestry has a fascinating story that ought to be told. Among the many items that are needed for the story to be well presented at landmark are: a small estate mill and assorted equipment; a steam engine; hand tools including various types of cross cut saws and a pit saw; cant hooks; early two men and one man chain saws; bogies; a seed oven and seed winnower; debarking machine; horse harness and equipment. Old photographs or drawings of any forestry activity would also be especially interesting. If any reader knows of any item that might be of use or of anyone who may be able to help with information could they please contact: David Hayes or Danny Fullerton at Landmark Centre, Carrbridge, Inverness shire. Telephone: 047 984 614.

INTERPRETING BOWHILL

By The Earl of Dalkeith

Hundreds of schoolchildren will gather again this summer at Bowhill House in the Scottish Borders for the two annual Estate Open Days. These Open Days, pioneered by my father the Duke of Buccleuch at Boughton, the family home in Northamptonshire, were extended two years ago to the Buccleuch Scottish Estates and now give local children and teachers a regular opportunity to meet people involved in a wide range of rural activities.

Foresters, farm stockmen, gamekeepers, tradesmen from the Estate Works Department, all offer practical demonstrations and discussion about their various jobs. Trees are felled and sawn, cattle fed and (at the appropriate time) milked, roofs and window frames are mended, and as many other estate activities go on as can practically and safely be performed in front of a young audience.

Particular attention is paid to advance preparation for teachers, with a presentation evening and a detailed information pack available beforehand. As it becomes more practical to establish a regular working relationship with schools in the area, closer links with the curriculum can be worked out.

Thanks to help from the Borders Regional Council these Open Days look like becoming an established event in the local calendar. But they are only one facet of a series of educational initiatives now being developed at Bowhill. Although house and grounds have been open for a decade, the Buccleuch Heritage Trust was established only recently as a registered educational charity, with the purpose of adding value and interest for visitors, young or old, casual tourists or organised groups. The focus is the house itself and its magnificent collections of paintings, miniatures, porcelain and furniture, which is seen in the context of a working estate whose traditions go back to the 17th century.

Programmes are evolving at different levels and for different tastes. On the artistic side, courses and series of lectures on different aspects of history and art, patronage and collecting in the Scottish Borders are being organised by Sotheby's. These involve specialist lectures in the fine and decorative arts and make use of the "raw material" of the house and its collections. The numbers participating are deliberately restricted so that the house is seen virtually as it is when the family are in residence, without ropes, druggets and signposts.

A complex of rooms in the stables has been converted to provide essential facilities, including a fully equipped lecture theatre and a base for the Community programme team who are doing much of the background work of reinstating trail routes and drawing up listings and photographs of items of interest.

As a general introduction for all visitors a tape/slide programme, "The Quest for Bowhill", was commissioned last year. The programme sets the scene by evoking the life at Bowhill at its height as a cultural centre for the Borders in the early 19th century, with the close family links with Walter Scott at nearby Abbotsford. The things the visitor sees in the house and grounds are related to the changing social fashions they reflect: the commissioning of family portraits in the 18th century represented by the brilliant group by Reynolds and Gainsborough; the paintings brought back from the Grand Tour; the fashion for the picturesque as seen through the windows and as pictures on the drawing-room wall; the High Victorian passion for collecting works of art of the past, at Bowhill pre-eminently the porcelain and the miniatures, which are world famous.

The programme uses three projectors and runs for twenty minutes. It is shown in the lecture theatre, but video tapes of it will also be available for schools and organised groups to see before their visit. It was produced by SIGHTLINES.

New for this year is a project to make more use of the old kitchen which was restored recently and is wonderfully endowed with original kitchen implements and paraphernalia. The traditional guide will be metamorphosed into a cook of the 1830s talking about life below stairs at the time and cooking 'parlies' and other tasty and aromatic local goodies of the period.

Also in preparation for this year is an additional nature trail, which will have a fully illustrated booklet to complement it. This focusses on the woodland round the house, looking at the way previous generations have taken into account the effect of commercial cultivation on the landscape and its ecology, and how we can continue to do so. Here, too, the aim is to show that the estate is not a museum or 'visitor centre' but a living, working environment.

We feel strongly that interpretation at Bowhill will be successful only it it is presented in the different ways that can make it vivid and absorbing to different audiences. By involving people at all levels we hope to widen the understanding of the traditional role of the great house as a focus for the cultural life and prosperity of the region, and to build respect not particulary for us at Bowhill but for all those who live and work in the countryside.

DULL IT WASN'T: CONFERENCE ON "SIGNING FOR INTERPRETATION"

Frank Howie, Planning Interpretive and Environmental Consultants 23 Leamington Terrace Edinburgh.

Dull it wasn't! Passing by a sign to a place with the unfortunate name of "Dull" (near Aberfeldy) co-incided to the day with being asked to organise a conference for SIBH, in May 1986. The Society is not particularly well known in Scotland, so I was happy to take this on—less happy when the title was given to me—"Signing for Interpretation". Somehow it doesn't hold the same charisma as "Interpretive Planning and Global Consciousness" or "Interpretation—Key to Economic Survival".

SIGNING AND INTERPRETATION

Don Aldridge of Ian White Associates the key-note speaker, put "signing" into the interpretation context. "Signs" can embrace everything from simple directional indicator boards to subtle advertisements. Thus "Signing" as a topic might include an exploration of the significance of signs and symbols in society. He quickly focussed on themes most relevant to practising interpreters. Does nature need interpreters? Does it not already give sufficient signs/interpret itself? Maybe so, but most people benefit from the guidance in reading these signs introduced by the interpreter.

Who are our signs aimed at? Can a sign succeed in getting over its message to everyone? Or should signs be targeted? Signs also have an important role in management; in marketing. In management, we are concerned with attracting optimum numbers of people to a site; in marketing, perhaps another attitude to numbers applies? What areas need signing most—the spectacular places, or the lacklustre places?

Signs are of course only part of the interpreter's repertoire of "tools". This includes media such as AV and services—walks, theatrical performances etc. Signs must be seen as only part of the interpretive strategy for a site or area. There are too many examples of "one-offs"—reasonably interesting signs which catch the visitor's eye, then offer no oportunities for follow up. The panel in Princes Street Gardens in Edinburgh explaining the geological/volcanic origins of the spectacular Castle rock is a good example. A leaflet is essentail to follow through the "new" knowledge—of volcanoes, and link it with most people's existing interest—the castle, the development of the City in this classic defensive site etc.

But to succeed in encouraging the visitor to take up the next interpretive step—eg the leaflet—the sign itself must contain a hint of dynamism, though presumably more than just "Now read the brochure..." Don Aldridge also reminded us that some visitors will be annoyed by the mere existence of signs.

I well remember when working with Lothian Regional Council in the late 70's explaining the benefit to be gained by designation of the Pentland Hills as a Regional park. Much of the voiced opposition centred on the proposed signposts—the mark of the bureaucrat, trammelling up the supposed "freedom of the hills"; others took a similarly hostile, but diametrically opposite view—signs encourage unwelcome elements, the masses, whose who don't really appreciate, those who don't really understand...

More recently, working on the Patrick Geddes Heritage Trail in Edinburgh's Royal Mile, I well remember the genuine concerns of the local civic society, the Cockburn Association, that this might add more clutter to the street scene. In this case, interpretive panels were rejected—discrete plaques would mark stopping points on the Trail. If the visitor wanted to know what they meant, then he had to track down the trail brochure. In practice, I feel this means that only those with prior knowledge/interest will follow the trail.

WORDS, IMAGES AND PRODUCTION

Bill Forbes and Ruth Grant of the Countryside Commission for Scotland got everyone's brain into operation through a practical exercise in designing a trail, devising signs and making choices on appropriate materials. We tend to have fixed expectations on what is appropriate for rural areas, urban areas, industrial areas etc in terms of materials, design etc. Bringing together a range of experiences largely confirmed these expectations but at least questions were raised. Michael Beese, also of CCS, then gave us a lunchtime tour of the Commission's excellent outdoor display of signs, materials, colour schemes etc so that our "expectations" might be seen after various periods of time in the realities of the Perth climate.

DYED IN THE WOOD FORESTERS

Bob Jones of the Forestry Commission went straight to the point—signs are about images. Recently returned from the international conference on interpretation at Banff National Park he described some excellent examples of Canadian interpretive signing.

But what image is the priority? Surely, that of the place itself, though the organisation will want to identify itself as the "provider" of a particular facility or service. Is there conflict here between the necessary uniformity of the corporate image and the uniqueness of a particular place? Bob also suggested that in the quest for appropriate signing, including the use of appropriate materials, colours etc, the signs might in fact become so much a part of the landscape as to be ignored. The examples he showed from the Commission's forests, certainly indicated how excellence in design can compliment the place and communicate effectively.

I spent a very formative summer in my undergraduate days in 1986, in Grizedale Forest in the Lake District, working with Bill Grant. At that time he had recently returned from North America bringing with him the latest ideas on forest signing. My respect for the Canadia/US appproach was confirmed when I later spent 2 years at the University of British Columbia working on "Wildland Recreation".

GENERIC SIGNS

Alec McGregor of the Scottish Tourist Board described the Board's increasing use of the "Blue Thistle" signs, directing the visitor to significant museums, castles, country parks, recreational activities etc. This is an example of a "generic sign"—the particular attraction is not named by the Board—the visitor can "accept" that if an attraction is given approval to use the Thistle sign, then it is a "significant" attraction. Competition for these signs is naturally fierce! And as one delegate asked, how is it that the Glass Factory which is Battleby's neighbour is awarded a "Thistle", while CCS HQ with its conference facilities, exhibition areas etc does not...?

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

David Illingworth of Aberdeen District

Tourist Board arrived at the conference fresh from the opening of its Castle Trail. Motivated in part by the success of the "Whisky Trail", which drew 120,000 visitors in 1985, this new trail will promote the area as "castle country".

Problems had been experienced earlier with the Highway Authority, concerned primarily with safety and directional aspects, and the rather unattractive AA signs were the only permissable addition to the standard highway signs. Things have loosened up since then and the Castle Trail features its own "Dracula symbol". These signs remain directional/locational only—interpretation is confined to the brochures or the guides.

David Illingworth made the arresting observation that in the whole process of developing the trail, "interpretation" is a word that was not used. The Board's language is that of economic development, job-creation, wealth generation.

This experience is in line with some of my own recent work, in an inner city area and in a small, fishing/resort town. While I would describe my role in these projects as one of interpretation/communication, through AVs, exhibitions and an input into the planning/development proposals for the areas, these words did not feature in the briefs.

FUN—THE VITAL INGREDIENT

Fun—that is the vital ingredient in interpretation; closely followed by simplicity, especially when we are talking about outdoor display panels. This is how Bill Breakell of the Bowness Heritage Trust in West Lothian shook us out of late afternoon drowsiness.

As interpreters, we are generally catering for a non-specialist audience—so keep it enjoyable, keep the message straightforward and "don't squeeze the words in". Developing the powers of observation of visitors is a main part of our taste—but it must be done in cunning ways.

A "hierarchy" of signing with which Bill had been invlolved at the North Yorkshire Moors Railway had three levels:

1. orientation panels (welcoming the visitors);
2. interpretive panels; and
3. listening posts with pre-recorded commentaries.

Thus the visitor who simply wanted directions would not have to wade through (for him) unwanted interpretive information, while further information was available for those who did want it.

Bill also warned of the importance of reading-times for the text on signs where a non-captive audience is the norm. Finally, drawing on his experience of working within the typically tight budgets of voluntary bodies and Trusts, he reminded us of the practical point that if time and money is being spent on graphics for signs, then bear in mind the possibility of using it also on post-cards and other revenue generating materials.

SUMMING UP

From an interpreter's point of view this was an informative and enjoyable conference. The chosen aspects of interpretation were presented in depth and practitioners from a range of backgrounds had the opportunity to discuss each other's point of view.

Membership of the Society in Scotland is small and my own impression is that the interpretive work that is going on here is without much co-ordination between agencies or individuals who might well benefit from the exchange of ideas that can arise through a thriving organisation—assuming we are willing to exchange our "trade secrets".

And who are the interpreters? I well remember at the Edinburgh AGM in 1986, my first year of membership, being surprised that "people like me" with a background in planning or environmental studies or landscape architecture were not exactly in the majority. Considering "us" to be the "natural interpreters", imagine my surprise when a museum administrator or some such person addressed me as "another of those interlopers". We need to talk!

IAN WHITE ASSOCIATES

Ben Tuxworth

Based in Glasgow, Ian White Associates are currently involved in interpretive planning throughout Scotland with a growing body of work in England and Europe. Applying the methodology developed in Britain by one of the partners, Don Aldridge, our recent work includes the following:

The Bowhill Heritage Trust commissioned a local plan of interpretation for this famous house and estate near Selkirk. Aspects of the plan, which focussed on Bowhill's significance in the history of landscape taste, were then developed, including a trail on woodland managment, a tapeslide programme about the house and its treasures and a prospectus for interpretation of the kitchen by living history guides.

The exhibition "Mr. Woods Fossils" opened at Glasgow's Hunterian Museum in April 1986 and is now touring the country. Our work included a tapeslide programme on conservation of Britain's earliest amphibians, discovered by Stan Wood in Bearsden, near Glasgow.

The North East of Scotland Agricultural Heritage Centre is situated in Aden Country Park, north of Aberdeen. Work for Banff and Buchan District Council included advice on the interpretive plan as well as the guide book and a video cartoon for this major new museum/visitor centre complex.

On a more technical level we were asked by Thirlestane Castle Trust to devise a plan to integrate the interpretation of this castle in the Borders with that of the Borders Country Life Museum, immediately adjacent. Linking had to be improved both physically and conceptually to portray the two separate entities as elements of a story common to both.

Work in Dundee for the Scottish Development Agency included the research that led to Scott's research vessel "Discovery" being brought back to its city of origin in the summer of 1986. The Discovery is to become the focal point of the Agency's waterfront project, an effort to stimulate new development in Dundee.

On a regional scale, we have produced a strategy for heritage interpretation in Western Tayside and Highland Perthshire, for a consortium of clients of both public and private sectors. The point of this regional approach is to aid would-be developers in choosing appropriate, original and therefore successful interpretation in an area centred on Pitlochry.

We have many other clients including the two Countryside Commissions, the Nature Conservancy Council and Highland Regional Council in the public sector, and Brahan Estates and the National Trust in the private sector.

INSITE A Training Service for Staff in Historic Houses and Museums

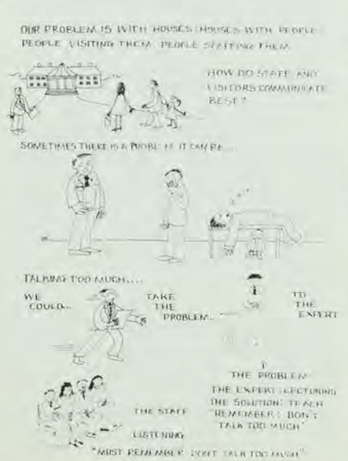
Marista Leishman
508 Lanark Rd, Edinburgh

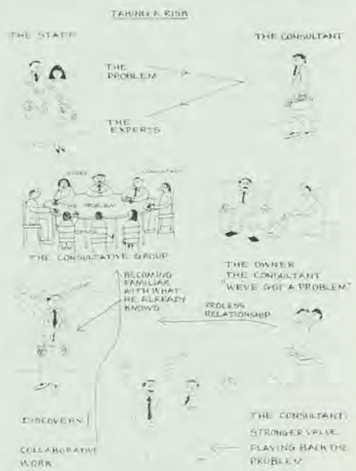
One day, working then as the National Trust's representative in the Georgian House I came across a luckless party of visitors, apparently frozen to the spot. The Guide spoke on and on and they, enmeshed in the confines of his verbiage stood stupified with boredom and incomprehension; for all the world as though held by the Ancient mariner and his glittering eye.

The kindest interpretation that could be put on this situation was that guiding was harder than I had supposed. I thought I should try it for a day. It was. I returned with relief to the files, the telephone and the dictation. But it became more than ever important to come to grips with the problem posed by communicating knowledge—as opposed to actually having it. Many study hours followed. At the end of it, however a source of wisdom, expertise, and authority were still not apparent, and the question about communication—what it is and how it is established—were unanswered.

Perhaps we were looking in the wrong place. Could it be that authority was in our midst? After all, the people who really knew about the job were the people who were actually doing it. The experience was there, with them; for with the successes they had enjoyed were also the problems they had encountered; They knew when they were getting through to people and when they weren't; even the Ancient Mariner knew that. It was almost as though people knew what to do, but that they needed to know that they knew. Expertise was found at last: not as a parade of skills, techniques, teaching packs, videos, platform occasions and workshops; but as being already in existence in the midst of the guiding team.

We have called this the No Risk situation because we are breaking no new ground and not changing anything very much: On the one hand we have the Expert, the Teacher, who organises his material so that all will understand the same. He is the authority figure. On the other hand we have the Listeners who work hard to assimilate the facts and to memorise. In this they are, on the whole, passive figures and no fundamental change is taking place.





And so we look to the experience of the people on the spot: to the learning they have done in carrying out their task; to the expertise they have gained. With the sources of expertise now apparent and available, an information, advice and training service for Guides is born. It is called THE INSITE TRUST. Insite is not doing something to somebody but helping them discover what they already know. Insite takes the experience of the staff on the job as being what counts, and the discovery of their own way of working. The Trainer comes into this, not as the authority figure, or the expert but as the Consultant whose role is as facilitator and who can make his or her contribution simply because he is the outsider. I have worked away with a group of Guides one of whom began to outline a particular situation as it recurred in that House. Another member of the group came in with a useful comment on it. But it was a third who produced what all agreed was a possible solution. The experts were after all the Guides themselves, and my role was simply that of the outsider to the scene whose usefulness lay in listening. Guides were partaking in a training solution without actually recognising it as such. And from the relationship between Consultant and Guides through whom this was happening followed the discovery that it was more important to have the problem even than to find the solution. To credit the problem with its existence was to take the first step towards solving it—while the too quick solution sometimes caused us to lose sight of the problem altogether.

It is through the Guides that the visitor principally remembers his visit: they are the people who give him his welcome and who personify the place for him. So much so, in fact, that they are identified with the property and "become" the place itself. The importance of the Guides goes a long way beyond that of security guards or purveyors of information.

The way that Insite works can be illustrated by the experience of a friend of mine who recently visited Wordsworth's Dove Cottage. He asked a question that the young student guide couldn't answer; but, getting down some books from the shelf, she suggested where she thought the answer might be found. Together they worked away and found what they were looking for. The Guide here had

not put herself above the visitor but had simply made it possible together to find the answer to the problem. In this same way Insite is on the same level as the Guides, not above them, but with them, so that together questions may be asked and answers looked for. Insite behaves and relates to the Guides just as Guides should relate to Vistors.

And in terms of modern business practice, where successful businesses allocate twice as much time and twice the resources to training as unsuccessful businesses, training in the world of the historic property visited by the public is becoming not only appropriate but indispensable. In opening a great house to the public, art, architecture and history may be our themes but people are the content: both the people who are there today as staff and the shadowy people of the past who fashioned the building, collected the things that are in it and who, in many cases, went out from it to shape their country's history. "In any place devoted to human history", says Freeman Tilden "the object is to bring to the eye and understanding of the visitor not just a building or site but the people who lived there". But the visitor is often very ignorant. The Guide must understand that ignorance and not be above it. The training of Insite is both about ignorance and expertise. It's about enabling Guides to know what they know; it's about encouraging them to find their own voice and to speak in their own dialect and relate in their own terms to the world which it is theirs to interpret; and through them to allow the great House and its old, precious, odd and costly things to speak to the visitor and to reveal to him its real meaning.

SHETLAND REPORT

Gordon Lyall

Interest in heritage conservation and interpretation is as strong in the farthest-flung northern islands as it is in mainstream, mainland Britain. On behalf of SIBH, answering a request from the Shetland Amenity Trust, I recently made a four day advisory tour of heritage developments, culminating in a day's seminar for local heritage groups from throughout the islands.

I found an energetic combination of local initiatives, sympathetic central organisation and support services, available financial resources from North Sea Oil revenues—and a comprehensive interpretive plan which has helped to guide but not constrict the developing pattern of interpretation in the islands. And all this with a resident population of only 23,000 and around 30,000 visitors a year.

Shetland

Shetland is a land apart, not only from mainland Britain but from the Highlands and Western Islands of Scotland too. Here there were no clansmen, no Gaelic language. From the 9th to 15th centuries Shetland was a sea cross-roads of the Norse domain, becoming officially Scottish only in 1469.

Shetland had full employment—in marked contrast to much of the rest of Britain—when oil was discovered in the North Sea. The boom has passed and Shetland is again looking to the development of its traditional industries. Conservation and amenity, and enjoyment of the islands rich heritage have enjoyed a great surge of interest in recent years and some of the financial muscle of revenues derived from astute agreements with the oil companies is now being exercised to help realise these assets for the benefit of residents and visitors alike.

The Tour

On behalf of SIBH, in company with Norman Mills, manager of the Shetland Amenity Trust, I visited six projects being supported by the Trust, five of them run by local groups who turned out in force to interrogate me on subjects ranging from the creation of captions, planning of heritage displays, and panel artwork; to conservation of museum objects, lighting and interior design, display casing and the care and use of old photographs.

Scalloway Museum opened 2 years ago in a converted stone-built shop building. It has especially interested visiting Norwegians. In Yell, the restored merchant's house, Old Haa, houses the local trust who are working on their visitor centre plans, which include use of video to record local crafts like weaving. On Unst, in another former shop, a collection of mainly crofting and domestic objects has been laid out to form the basis of Britain's most northerly heritage centre, where geology and quarrying are features of local heritage which ultimately will feature strongly.

In Northmavine, the old merchant's house of Tangwick Haa is part restored and the local history group turned out en masse to discuss how they could approach their interior design and layout, now that they could see the previously roofless ruin taking shape. In Lerwick, the Bod of Gremista has been beautifully and painstakingly restored. The woodwork has been recreated down to the wooden door latches and new Bressay stone slates have been hung on traditional wooden pegs. This building is the birthplace of Arthur Anderson, a famour Shetland benefactor perhaps better known further south as the founder of P & O, which still runs to Shetland. Then south, dropping by plane on tiny Fair Isle, a speck in the ocean between Shetland and Orkney, best known for its bird observatory, to visit what must be Britain's remotest museum, with displays built by the local group, to face questions about how to counter the effect of salt carried in the wind on metal objects.

And last but certainly not least, west of Lerwick, Jeanie Sandison's Privately built-up and run, but Amenity Trust supported, Tingwall Agricultural Museum, which in reality is Shetland's agricultural museum. The guided tour, and the revelations of education provision were a delight.

Interpreting Shetland

Alastair Hamilton, Planning Officer (Conservation)
Shetlands Islans Council

Shetland's first interpretive plan, 'Interpreting Shetland', published in 1983, has helped to shape the developing pattern of interpretation in the islands. The plan accompanied, rather than stimulated, growth in interest in the interpretation of Shetland. Most of the developments which have taken place are based on local individual or community initiatives.

The underlying reason for the plan was the surge of interest in Shetland's history and natural history in the later seventies and early eighties. Shetlanders had always had a powerful curiosity in their surroundings and their past, but the advent of the oil industry, carrying with it the threat of pollution and the possible loss of older ways of living, concentrated minds.

These expressions of interest coinciding with the run-down in the construction phase of the Sullom Voe Oil Terminal meant that good quality accommodation was available on a larger scale than ever before, providing the opportunity to expand and develop the tourist industry. The Council has prepared a Tourism Plan which draws extensively on 'Interpreting Shetland'. The availability of finance derived from the oil industry meant that some, at least, of the proposals put forward stood some chance of coming to fruition.

The plan doesn't try to prescribe precise solutions for every possible site. Though it contains a potted history and natural history of the islands, it would be impossible—and undesirable—to try to set out all that is worth knowing, or saying. The plan doesn't attempt to establish a budget for interpretation; assessing finance for projects was not something of which we then had enough experience to make sensible judgements. Even today, the connection between the availability of finance and the realisation of a project is more tenuous than one might expect.

'Interpreting Shetland' attempts to establish broad ground-rules for anyone who wishes to provide interpretive facilities, or who has to decide where or not such facilities ought to receive support. It begins by sketching the main themes which figure in Shetland's history and natural history. The material is drawn almost entirely from published sources, but has been checked by local experts to ensure that it is as up-to-date and authoritative as possible. Chapters examine the needs of different audiences and assess the extent and quality of existing interpretation. The strategy then put forward is based on two approaches: expansion or development at existing sites, and the establishment of completely new facilities:;

'Many stories could be told about Shetland and many sites could be developed with visitor facilities of one kind or another. The amount of material is enormous...On the other hand, it is important that whatever is done does not erode the sense of freedom, or the certainty of peace and quiet, which are among the most valued ingredients of Shetland's environment. There are, in other words, places where a visitor should be able to discover landscape, a carpet of wild flowers or the poignancy of deserted crofts without the intervention of bureaucracy. The approach must be selective and subtle'.

The Hanseatic Booth

With that in mind, attention turns to the question of how existing facilities can be developed or improved, one suggestion being that the appeal of sites dealing with one theme may sometimes be broadened in order to offer something for a wider (though not infinitely wide!) range of visitors. The island of Noss, a National Nature Reserve associated especially with seabirds, was also the site of a stud developed at the end of the last century to provide pit-ponies for north-east England. The stud was restored in 1985 and now houses a display which tells that story, as well as providing the non-expert with an outline of the bird life of the island. With care, it was possible to make links between such superficially disparate themes sufficient—we hope—to allow the experience to hang together.

The consideration given to the new facilities is necessarily less site-specific, the emphasis being on suggesting themes which might best be pursued in particular districts. The need to avoid encouraging the creation of half-a-dozen identical 'croft house museums', all telling the same story, was very much to the fore. Thus the story of the whaling, and some phases of the fishing industry, are put forward as possibilities in the Northmavine area. The operation known as the 'Shetland Bus'—the evacuation of refugees from occupied Norway and support for the resistance during World War II—is proposed for Scalloway. There are various proposals for particular aspects of natural history. Some themes were deliberately left 'floating', so that further discussion might produce the necessary spark to allow an idea to develop. The story of Shetland knitwear, women's history and the activities of the Press Gang were quoted as examples. A base for the first of these may be established soon.

Looking through the plan after four years, it is clear that quite a lot of what was foreseen or suggested has either materialised already, or will do so within a year or so. Progress has been made on virtually all of the suggestions for improvement at existing sites. A major proposal for a new museum and orientation centre in Lerwick (combined with arts facilities) is the subject of a current Feasibility Study. Funding bodies—particularly the Shetland Amenity Trust—are guided by the plan in offering grant aid.

All of this is not to suggest that everything has gone smoothly. For example, adherence to guidelines intended to avoid duplication is not always easy, particularly where proposals are actually carried out by enthusiastic local groups, but this aspect of the policy is nevertheless standing up better than we imagined it might. The preparation of the plan has proved to be entirely justified and its implementation has proceeded at least as successfully as we had hoped.

Correction

Ian Parkin's travel award to investigate inner city locations in America is a British Education Travel Trust award and not a Churchill Scholarship as previously reported.

Trusting in Success

Gordon L Mann (ex-Director of Planning, Shetland Islands Council)

In 1980, the Shetland Islands Council Planning Department was considering how to try and restore the Pier House on the Island of Whalsay, a former Hanseatic trading booth, which had by then become almost a ruin. A small restoration committee was set up drawn from the local community and with representatives of the Museum, the Tourist Organisation and the Planning Department. The committee was successful in obtaining grant aid from a variety of agencies.

This led in 1982 to a suggestion that a new trust be established to carry out this type of work throughout Shetland. The new trust met for the first time in February 1983. It had initially 3 Trustees (two Councillors and the Director of Planning) and one of the first tasks was to invite nomination for further trustees from outside organisations. The Trust now has 13 trustees; several are drawn from local groups such as the Bird Club, Field Studies Group, Tourist Organisation, Community Councils, Shetland Museums Forum, and Civic Society. The Trust has also invited people to join as independent trustees.

The Trust has two main objectives: the preservation of buildings (and artifacts) of historic interest and the provision and improvment of facilities for the enjoyment by the public of the Shetland countryside. In practice it has been prepared to look at any project relating to amenity and conservation.

The Trust was appointed by the MSC as the Managing Agency for its Community Programme Scheme and an initial allocation of eight places has now grown to 50. One squad has been used to convert or restore three buildings as local museums and visitor centres. When these were completed, exhibition assistants were recruited to assist the local group, prepare material for displays and to carry out research.

Over the past four years, assistance has been given for several developments involving the transformation of old buildings into local museums or heritage centres. These projects are at various stages. The Trust has also been involved in serveral interpretation projects throughout Shetland both directly and indirectly through its grant aid fund. In all these cases it is essential that there is a local committee which develops the scheme and is sufficiently committed to run the centre once it is created.

At first, Planning Department staff administered the Trust, but it was not long before this became impractical and the trust now has its own administrative structure.

The Administration Unit is run by a Manager who has a staff of three to look after the administrative and financial affairs of the Trust. There is also a project Officer and clerical assistant responsible for the Community Programme work. Recently, the Countryside Commission agreed to assist in the costs of a second Project Officer who is responsible for the trusts countryside and interpretation work. The Royal Commission on the Ancient & Historical Monuments of Scotland has also agreed to assist with the costs of an archaeologist.

There are several important lessons to be learnt from this experience, not the least of which is that the end product is well worth the effort. The interest in history and the need for better interpretation were all present before the Trust came into being. The Trust has provided a focus for this activity and a channel for funds, from the Council's oil revenues and, more importantly, from outside agencies. The Trust has been successful in attracting funds from organisations as diverse as the EEC, Countryside Commission for Scotland, Royal Scottish Museum etc. Without these funds there is no doubt that few of the Trust's projects could have been completed in such a short space of time.

Working with local groups is the other essential ingredient for success. This is not always easy, with all the problems of communication that are inherent in voluntary organisations. On occasions relations with the groups have become strained and it is always a time-consuming exercise to ensure that everyone understands what is happening. The interpretive plan has played a part in guiding the development of these centres but it has not been used to force the pace. All the groups now meet twice a year in the Shetland Museums Forum to discuss their plans and to try and avoid any duplication of effort. It is for example, very difficult for these groups to establish a rigid museum collection policy. When a cherished article is handed into the local museum it is impossible to refuse as to do so in such a small community could affect the museum's local credibility and support. The groups are discussing ways of lending within Shetland and of constructing touring exhibitions to try to overcome this problem.

The Trust itself also has problems in deciding its priorities. With almost half of the funding coming from the Council's oil revenues and with the fall in the price of oil the Trust has to demonstrate that it represents good value for money. Projects which directly relate to the Council's wish to develop a better tourist industry will inevitably get priority. The Trust also needs publicity in order to gain support in winning funds but at the same time the local groups must also get credit for their considerable efforts. The Trust is now firmly established in Shetland. It is unlikely that it will grow any further but it will consolidate its position. It is an interesting example for other areas to follow.

Jarlshof Wheelhouse

Jarlshof - Unravelling the Ancient Stones

Jarlshof from the air

Gordon Lyall

Jarlshof is Shetland's premiere archaeological site and tourist attraction. In 1986 Scotland's Historic Buildings and Monuments Directorate commissioned Gordon Lyall Associates to create a new interpretive centre to bring meaning and life to the visible evidence which represents a series of settlement periods spanning 3,000 years of human history. As a result of excavations, visitors see evidence of the Bronze Age, several phases of the Iron Age, Viking/Norse and Medieaval periods. To the unprepared, Jarlshof presents a confusing jumble of stoneworks ranging from the obviously mediaeval to the meaninglessly ancient, further confused by the fact that these remains are seen all together, creating a spurious impression of contemporariness.

The key initial objective was to get over to the arriving visitor the idea of long human occupation, how the evidence had built up and been buried, and how subsequent archaeological investigations had peeled away the layers, effectively reversing the process. This was an essential prerequisite to any effort to explain and bring to life individual episodes in Jarlshof's long story. The central idea is now conveyed by large model displays which confront visitors entering the centre: 'Before...Jarlshof in the late 19th century'; and 'After...Archaeologists have peeled away the layers'. With virtually no text, these models and their associated cut-away graphics form an immediate focus of understanding, and a physical focus, in the new centre.

Much of the new display is concerned with visually bringing to life something of the main periods represented at Jarlshof—the Bronze, Iron and Viking times. The content and form of the interpretation takes special account of the variety of remains which visitors see on the site, and tries to anticipate and answer the different questions which these prompt. The nature of the visitor audience was also a special factor.

The Viking remains are among the most important in Britain and comprise a large area of wall bases and foundations, which even to the layman obviously are the remains of a number of buildings—but of what? The question immediately posed is what did the Viking village look like?—i.e. a desire to see an outside general view. In contrast, from the late Iron Age period has survived an almost perfect wheelhouse, a vaulted, beehive-like drystone structure missing only the topmost section of roof and the furnishings of everyday life. To stand inside this ancient house is to feel the strongest desire to know what it was like to live inside about 2,300 years ago. The Bronze Age remains are sufficient to delineate the oval shapes of early hutted dwellings, but their most fascinating evidence is that of a smith casting and working metal at Jarlshof about 500 BC, as revealed by many finds of mould fragments, a casting pit and hearth.

Drawing on detailed archaeological research, the displays recreate the smithy. Touchable, accurate replicas, in bronze, of axeheads and swords, along with their clay moulds have been specially made. The Viking village, with views out to the headland and bay—just as the visitor sees is brought to life in large mural form with several cut-away foreground layers, with folk going about a range of everyday activities.

Life inside the wheelhouse is depicted in an unusual display—a perspective box model of the interior domestic scene. The reconstruction is viewed through an eyepiece aperture. As if standing in the doorway of the wheelhouse, one peers into a dark interior lit only by flickering oil lamps and peat fires. Awareness of the rest of the centre recedes as the eye adjusts to the semi-darkness and takes in the view. The iron age family at work preparing for the winter with all the paraphernalia of the wheelhouse scattered around, are revealed with a striking realism which is often lacking in large-scale displays.

Bronze Smithy

COMMUNICATING AND UNDERSTANDING

Alan Machin

In an article in the last issue of Heritage Interpretation I suggested that we needed a much broader perspective for the subject. It was also suggested that a concept could be introduced which provided a good viewpoint: the 'dimensions of discovery', ways by which we measure the world around us and gain understanding. The activity of interpretation was seen not as the communication process that we have recently taken it to be, but as that of the application of opinion. This article looks further, at communication and understanding.

In the previous article I defined four 'dimensions of discovery'. These were first, the Circle of Contact—with family, friends and acquaintances, second, the widening of the Circle through Travel, third, the Mass Media, and fourth, Education.

The processes by which we obtain understanding are very complex, but it is easy to see that the more the learning process goes on the greater our power of understanding becomes. New experiences are seen in the light of old ones, and from them we will reach some state of belief about the world which will help interpret new experiences. The process goes on thoughout our lives, constantly upgrading our opinions.

Within our physical and mental selves there are three important areas which control knowledge—the senses which communicate information, the parts of the brain which achieve some sort of understanding, and the parts which store experiences. But there are also extensions to these which are outside the body, and which work interactively with it. The senses rely on media such as the telephone and letters. They provide channels for discussions with other people, extending our reasoning abilities. They also give access to storage media, from books and recordings to pictures and maps.

One of the reasons why 'understanding' is a complicated process is that the stream of bits of information not only come in many forms—words, pictures, smells and so on—but that at every stage they are modified by the carrier. If each little bit is defined as a percept, then it seems that there might be many modifications to every one on the way through a human being who is passing on knowledge. Simple messages which are well defined as far as our brains are concerned will not be modified. A word like 'and' is taken in and can be communicated unaltered, though its meaning may be open to interpretation. On the other hand, consider what can happen to a noise like a car backfiring, heard but not seen. Was it a car or a gun? Does it mean trouble? Do we need to investigate? Where did it happen? Did it happen about the time we also heard a scream? Can we recall it five years later? Would we then describe it accurately?

The point is illustrated by following the sequence through, of which the following is only one possible version.

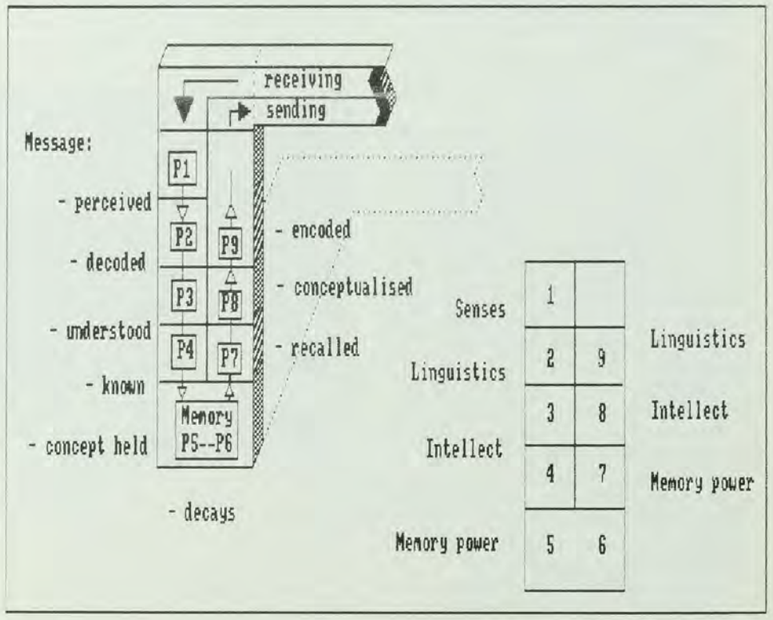
The percept which is received can be termed P1. Thanks to the varying nature of our senses, they may well modify it into P2, for example by inaccurately handling a visual image, a sound or a smell. Our brains then decode the signal received, and may produce P3. This is the point at which the percept becomes perception. Next, interpreting that perception involves the operation of experience, with much comparision of it with previous, similar signals. That experience colours the message which is being handled, thanks to the operation of connotations—seeing the colour red triggers an alertness for danger, for example. P4 has arrived.

Having thought about the message, the brain comes to its conclusion, and holds the 'thought' as a concept—P5. What does it do with the thought but store it? Unfortunately the memory is fallible, and here comes P6. As we all know P6 itself will be modified with time.

When we are ready to communicate the thought to someone else, the reversing of this sequence produces more modifications. P6 is recalled into conciousness, but having been subjected to the vagaries of humanity it is now actually P7. The brain does its best to think how the thought should be expressed, and struggling to cope, creates P8. And finally the thought is communicated by word or other method, in an approximation which is P9. This sequence of linked, modified percepts might be made memorable as the P9 Chain!

If a string of people is involved, handling the message—itself made up of numerous percepts—then there may be much modification. No wonder that the story existed of the difficulty of passing messages between soldiers in the trenches, when "send re-inforcements, we are going to advance" supposedly became "send three and fourpence, we are going to a dance".

These message handling processes act within an individual and within a corporate entity such as a committee, editorial board or association. In law such bodies have the status of separate beings, and it is the same in terms of communication. These bodies operated on two levels. They act as a series of individuals, each receiving, processing and passing on messages in a complex chain. They also harmonise these activities in a crude operation which produces a joint result by an act of synergy.



Communication does not necessarily involve people. A person can communicate with an animal through visual language, sounds, touches and odours. Plants give messages through sight, smell and touch, though with no cognition on their part.

Message processing is carried on within each dimension of discovery. Within all four dimensions there are the producers of messages—the senders—and the audiences—the receivers, handlers and modifiers operate at every stage, and they can be individuals or groups, each with internal modifiers.

Interpretation is the process by which a view, shaped by an individual's understanding, is impressed on a 'message', whether it is a string of words, an image, a piece of music, or any other communication code. It reflects an opinion: expressed in a statement of one kind or another.

In dimension 1, face to face contact, the people talking will have modifiers at work. How they process the message—and therefore interpret it—will depend on many factors from mental abilities to training and experience.

Dimension 2, travel, has as its significance the fact that the traveller will be discovering new locations, with the knowledge that that can bring. There will a communication between the new place and its people on the one hand, and the traveller on the other.

In dimension 3, an individual communicates with many, either directly, as in live broadcasing, or indirectly, as in publishing. An address to a public meeting is an example of dimension one, as it does not involve an external communication medium, though it could be argued that if part of the address was carried over a tannoy to the neighbouring room, then it is an example of a mass medium.

The defining feature is the fact that the individual is communicating with many, with only a delayed feed-back from that audience, if there is any at all. This is the case with publishing, broadcasting, graphic art, some forms of music, and the other mass media. A live performance by a pianist comes into the first dimension, but the act of communication by the composer comes into the third, that of the mass madia, because the work, once written is available to an infinite audience. Even if the composer, author, or artist is dead!

Dimension 4, education, is characterised by the incorporation of all of the other dimensions' features. It uses face-to-face communication, travel and the mass media, unlike the latter, with little feedback, education reqires a constant and large amount of feedback, and so is like a cross between dimensions 1 and 3.

Clearly, the way in which each dimension works is largely controlled by communication factors. The travel dimension involves both communication in the sense of transport, and in the sense of messages, and it is in the latter that we find the link between interpretation and tourism.

It is because of the message communication inherent to tourism that it is essential for the people engaged in that activity to appreciate the social and cultural consequences—and that they have access to a highly-effective opinion maker. Again, it seems clear that interpretation is more the process of modification than it is of communication.

MINDFUL VISITORS, MINDFUL STAFF

Gianna Moscardo
James Cook University of North Queensland

The success of any interpretive service or facility ultimately rests on the experience it provides for the public. Evaluation of visitor responses is the key to determining the effectiveness of interpretation and yet so very little is attempted. The research that has been conducted has, on the whole, revealed some very depressing statistics. It suggests, for example, that American museum visitors remember very little, if anything at all, from their experiences (Borun, 1977). A study commissioned by the Countryside Commissions in a number of visitor centres throughout the United Kingdom also suggested that visitors may not be gaining very much information from their visits (Countryside Commission, 1977). The statistics in this study also implied that visitor learning was unrelated to visitor enjoyment, not a positive finding for those working in interpretation.

In the United States the emphasis in visitor evaluation research has been on exhibits and exhibit media. A classic study by Washburne and Wagar (1972) investigated which types of exhibit media, subject matter and style of subject presentation were preferred by visitors. They concluded that violent subject matter (for example volcanic eruptions), dynamic or audiovisual exhibits and exhibits that told a story were the most effective. But how are these elements combined to create successful exhibits? These conclusions prompt more questions than answers. For instance, are dynamic exhibits always successful or only in relation to certain subject matter? Are audio-visual exhibits successful because certain subject matter lends itself more readily to this display technique?

How can visitor evaluation research be better conducted? It is this author's argument that what is necessary is a model of the visitor and their interpretive experience. The basis of this model is the concept of mindfulness/mindlessness. The idea originates in the field of social cognition where psychologists have been studying how people cope with the large amounts of information in everyday social situations. The research shows that on the whole people are mindless, that is, not actively processing information. They are behaving according to scripts or routines of behaviour. The classic example is that of driving a car along a well known route and arriving at the destination without any recall of the events along the way. Mindfulness, on the other hand, is a state of actively processing information, searching for information and creating new concepts, categories or schema. Mindful people learn and recall more from their experiences, and are happier and even live longer. Indeed mindful people are ideal visitors and yet evidence suggests that visitors are most likely to be mindless.

The author with Dr. Philip Pearce conducted a secondary analysis of the countryside commission data on visitor centres using this mindfulness model (Moscardo & Pearce, 1986). In this analysis, guided by the model, it was found that enjoyment was related to mindfulness and that some of the centres were promoting mindful visitors. The authors concluded that visitor evaluation needs to be more complex and should concentrate on more sophisticated measures of visitor learning and visitor mindfulness. By doing this it was argued the research will more accurately describe what is happening and offer guidelines for improving exhbits.

At a recent seminar and workshop in Melbourne, sponsored by the Museums Association of Australia, Victorian Branch the authors used the

ideas on mindfulness and visitor evaluation as the basis of two exercises conducted with 43 staff from museums, historical towns and national parks throughout the state. in these exercises the staff were asked to be visitors and their responses to a series of exhibits were evaluated. The results indicated that even highly motivated museum staff can be mindless visitors if you give them an appropriate exhibit.

In the first exercise the workshop participants were shown a mock up of an exhibit on forestry techniques designed on the basis of photographs of similar exhibits taken in several united Kingdom Forestry Commission Visitor Centres. They were asked to rate their interest in the topic and to write a short paragraph describing forestry techniques as they understood them before seeing the mock up. After studying the exhibit they were asked to again rate their interest, to answer three multiple choice questions taken from the exhibit (the technique most often used in visitor evaluation to assess visitor learning), to write another short paragraph on what they had learnt and to answer a series of questions indicating whether or not they were mindful. The results:—

1. Less than 50% of the group could answer the multiple choice questions correctly (mean across the three questions).

2. An initial anyalysis of the paragraphs revealed that the exhibit had given the group some new information about forestry techniques.

3. Generally the participants were mindful about the exhibit. Slightly more than half of the group (56%) were surprised by something in the exhibit, 60% had stopped and thought about something in the exhibit and 65% felt they had learnt something new. Yet only 29% had any questions about the topic.

4. Finally, the participants were less interested in the topic after seeing the exhibit with 7% saying they were very interested and 40.5% saying they were not particularly interested before seeing the exhibit. After seeing the exhibit 0% said it was very interesting and 49% said it was not particulary interesting.

What can we conclude? The group were highly motivated to participate in the exercise and experienced a single exibit for a short period of time. They were mindful and yet the exhibit appears to have failed to interest even these visitors. How then would such an exhibit work in an interpretive centre? One can suggest that it would be a failure.

The second exercise used slides of rooms taken from three historical buildings in Australia. The slides were of an 1880's dentist's surgery, a colonial kitchen and a colonial inn. The participants were again asked a series of questions to assess whether or not they were mindful, they were also asked to rate how enjoyable a visit to such a museum would be and to fill out a mood check list. The checklist required them to describe how the room made them feel.

The following results show that the most enjoyable slide and the slide most likely to induce mindfulness was that of the dentist's surgery.

An investigation of the adjective check list revealed why this was the case. The dentist's surgery was far more likely to be rated as interesting, involving, surprising and serious and to make people feel wide awake than the other two rooms. In this instance a detailed analysis showed which was the most successful exhibit, how it was successful and why.

In conclusion the exercises illustrated a number of points about visitor evaluation to the participants. For example, that simple measures of learning may misrepresent the amount of information actually learnt by visitors, that the amount of information gained may not be related to developing an interest in the topic and that mindfulness is related to enjoyment. The exercises also demonstrated that a visitor is a complex being and that visitor evaluation needs to look at a number of aspects of the visitor including motivation, mood and mindfulness to fully understand the impact of interpretation.

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CRITERIA FOR GOOD PRACTICE : THE CARNEGIE INTERPRET BRITAIN AWARDS

David L Uzzell
Department of Psychology
University of Surrey

Setting the Scene

Whenever we visit a heritage attraction, we make all sorts of judgements about it. These judgements can be coloured by the smallest incident—but also by our interests, abilities, prejudices and all those other things which contribute to an experience. We are not all rational human beings.

When people visit a heritage site, they don't just go to see the exhibition or the interpretation, they go for a pleasant day out and an enjoyable experience. The interpretation is only one—perhaps a minor part—of the day out.

Criteria for Good Practice

It is within this framework that the Carnegie Interpret Britain Award Panel started to formulate criteria for good practice. Although the Awards are made for good interpretive practice, it was thought that in assessing heritage interpretation it is necessary to take into account the whole visitor experience, in as much as one can.

For this reason, and to ensure that the Award judges judge all the entries by the same criteria, the Panel devised an assessment schedule which currently comprises 47 questions. In this way judges can systematically assess a site and know (as do the entrants) that a judge in the north of Scotland is using the same criteria as a judge in the south of England.

These 47 questions can be broken down into five sections:

Planning
Scripting
Design
Catering for the Visitor
Management

Trying to collate and compare the answers of 10-15 judges at 80 sites would be extremely difficult. So we ask each judge to rate each question on a scale of good/high performance v. poor/low performance. This has enabled us to computerise the operation which means that not only can we compare entries quickly and easily, but we can do two other things which ensure each entry is judged in an objective way as possible.

It was the Panel's view that some of these sections and some of these questions are more important than others. It was agreed by the National panel that the following weights should apply to the various sections.

Planning	25%
Scripting	15%
Design	25%
Catering for the Visitor	20%
Management	15%

Within each section the answers to some of the individual questions are given more weight than others.

Although the idea of having 47 criteria is to ensure that all the entries are judged fairly and comprehensively, biases can creep even into the judges assessment and scoring. For example, some judges may mark hard, and others may mark leniently. Again, we get round the problem by a process of standardising the scores. This simply reduces extreme scoring. Therefore a judge that does mark high will not have an undue influence over the final ranking of the results, and his/her entries will not necessarily come in the top (or bottom) six.
However, if an entry is genuinely good the scoring system will pick it up and it will emerge as a front runner.

It should also be noted that in addition, judges provide a brief qualitative assessment of the entry they are judging in the form of a short report.

The need for Self Assessment

There is no magic or mystique to assessment. Many of the criteria judges use are the same criteria used by the public themselves everytime they visit a heritage attraction. The only difference is that we have articulated these criteria and put them down on paper in a comprehensive and systematic way.

If a judge rates your heritage site as poor, in a sense it doesn't matter. All this means is that the site does not get an award. If a member of the public visits your site and you are found wanting, they many not have an enjoyable and informative visit, they many not return, or recommend you to others. This is far more serious.

Everyone ought to be assessing the facilities and services they provide. Everyone ought to be their own judge.

If you want to know what questions or assessment criteria to use, just be a visitor at your own heritage site for a day. Wear the visitor's shoes and look through his/her eyes.

CHAIRMAN'S COMMENTS

Ian Parkin

In the past few months there have been some interesting developments on a number of fronts which you might be interested to know of.

The society's relationship with The Centre for Environmental Interpretation is strengthening and your Committee have agreed in principle that if it is possible to obtain funding for the appointment of a Development Officer (and grant applications are pending), then it would be sensible for the post to be located alongside CEI at Manchester Polytechnic. Not only would CEI welcome it but we understand the Director of the Polytechnic is also supportive. We are hopeful that grant applications will be successful and that we will be able to make an appointment before the summer is out.

It is clear to me that the Society has reached a size that a voluntary committee, however hard-working, cannot cope with the range of activities and services we would like to maintain, and preferably develop, without the help of a full-time officer. The Extraordinary General Meeting held at Cardiff in November agreed to an ambitious programme for the Society over the next five years including doubling membership. The officer is the next logical step. Watch this space for developments!

I am also hopeful that a package of sponsorship will be forthcoming to secure the Interpret Britain Awards for a period of three years from 1988. We are indeed fortunate that the Carnegie United Kingdom Trust had agreed to fund the Awards in 1987 and the Northern Ireland Tourist Board are sponsoring the ceremony to be held in Belfast on Thursday, 5 November 1987, followed by a 3-day seminar at the Dunadry Hotel—a truly luxury hotel in beautiful surroundings close to the Airport.

The Northern Ireland weekend is being organised by our good friend and supporter Shirley Miller so we can be assured of a stimulating and enjoyable weekend. Please put the 5-8 November in your diary—a weekend NOT TO BE MISSED

We are looking for 100 entries this year in the Carnegie Interpret Britain Award Scheme so PLEASE encourage your friends to enter to ensure that the Carnegie sponsored Award Scheme culminates in the best and highest quality entry yet.

MEMBERS NEWS

Branson's Right Hand Man

Brian Lymbery is leaving the Civic Trust to become the first full-time Executive Director of UK 2000. This is chaired by Richard Branson and was set up in July 1976 as a charitable partnership between Government, the private sector, and seven voluntary organisations—British Trust for Conservation Volunteers, Civic Trust, Community Service Volunteers, Friends of the Earth, Groundwork Foundation, Keep Britain Tidy Group, and Royal Society for Nature Conservation.

Editor Resigns

John Holder has had to resign for family reasons. Good luck to the new Editor, and thank you John for your positive contribution and the good work you have done on issues 33 and 34.

New Heritage and Tourism Partnership

The Michaels Quinion and Glen have merged their heritage and tourism interests in a new consultancy called Touchstone Associates.

First Interpreters Work

First Interpreters have recently completed a study of 33 tourism attractions in the Black Country, with outline development proposals for those with most potential. It will be published by the Heart of England Tourist Board.

They have also been commissioned by the Forestry Commission to produce a Development and interpretive Plan for Bedgebury National Pinetum, near Tunbridge Wells, which has one of the finest collections of pine trees in the world.

Gordon Lyall Moves

1987 is set to be Gordon's busiest year ever. Present projects include opening a mine to the public; heritage tourism project assessment; visitor centre and museum based on a multimedia dramatisation of famous narrative poem; a natural history "experience" design and implementation; archaeological reconstruction feasibility; theme park feasibility; and a motor museum development.
Gordon's new address is 20, Castlebrae Centre, Peffer Place, Edinburgh EH16

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear Mr Holder,

I was interested to read the article by Alan Machin drawing attention principally to Don Cross' book "Follow me Please".

The final paragraph would lead one to believe that practical training is a haphazard thing which shows that his research has not brought him up-to-date.

Since 1982 the training for Scottish Tourist Guides has been under the care of the Extra-Mural Departments of the universities of Edinburgh, Glasgow and Aberdeen in conjunction with the Scottish Tourist Guides Association, with the Scottish Tourist Board keeping a kindly eye on it all. After selection from applicants, trainees spend two evenings a week in lectures covering the whole of Scotland and include geology, art, archaeology, literature, industry and education, with the most weekends in practical work. This lasts 6-7 months finishing with exams which have to be passed before achieving the coveted Blue Badge of the Association. Thereafter, in-service lectures and tours to keep the guides up-to-date are taken in the winter.

One could continue, but perhaps the professional guides badge will appeal more now to Mr. Machin.

Yours sincerely,

Elizabeth Seton, Member Scottish Tourist Guides Association.

Dear Sir/Madam,

I would like to draw your attention to the protection of exhibits from the deterioration and damage caused by the ultraviolet radiation content of light.

This damage can be controlled by ultra-violet filters which do not affect the optical clarity of the windows of the appearance of the building. They are available in polyester sheets or liquid form and are applied direct to the surface of existing glazing.

David J. French, Managing Director, Sun-X Ltd., Hook Lane, Aldingbourne, Chichester, PO20 6TB

NEW MEMBERS

We are pleased to welcome the following as recent new members to the Society

Briony Penn:
Earthworm Design: Dunbarney:
BRIDGE of EARN Perthshire PH2 9EE

Malcolm George:
Hants & I.o.W. Defence Heritage: Ferry Gardens: South Street GOSPORT
Hants PO12 1EP

Jan Dungey:
8 Earsham Street: BUNGAY: Suffolk

Diana Smith:
7 Curley Drive: Hythe:
SOUTHAMPTON Hants SO4 6GB

Mrs Ailyse Hancock:
42 Winds Point: Hagley:
STOURBRIDGE West Midlands DY9 0PN

Jackie Storey:
Harlow Study Centre: Information Services Dept: Harlow Council Town Hall HARLOW Essex

Mrs Diana Lush:
Treetops: Western Promenade:
LLANDRINDOD WELLS Powys LD1 5LY

Alan Wilson:
176 Millers Way: Brampton:
HUNTINGDON Cambs PE18 8UA

Mr. A.D. Hunt:
Corporate - for Brewer Smith & Brewer Architects
Brewer Smith and Brewer: 3 Bellevue Terrace: PORTSMOUTH Hants PO5 3AT

Mrs Marista Leishman:
Hunter's House: 508 Lanark Road:
EDINBURGH EH14 5DH

Mr D Wilmont:
Corporate for Moyle District Council
Giants Causeway Visitor Centre: 44 Causeway Road: BUSHMILLS Co Antrim BT57 8SU Northern Ireland

Mrs Christine Portch:
c/o 9 The Croft: Sutherland Avenue:
BEXHILL East Sussex TN39 3QU

Mr. P.H. Blackburn:
Broomhouse Farm Cottage: Witton Gilbert: DURHAM DH7 6TR

Patricia Thompson:
5 Turnberry Road: Hyndland:
GLASGOW G11 5AF

Miss Chris Wade:
2 Star Row: North Dalton: DRIFFIELD YO25 9UR

Mr. M.H. Harrison:
15 Willoughby Road: Countesthorpe:
Leicestershire LE8 3UA

Dr R.J. Price
16 Northbank Road: Kirkintilloch:
GLASGOW G66 1EU

Technical Librarian:
Kent County Council: Technical Library: Property Services Dept.
Springfield MAIDSTONE Kent

JOB VACANCIES

Countryside Interpretation Officer,
Weston-Super-Mare Heritage Centre. £8,500 p.a. Two Year Contract

To develop countryside interpretation within a 15-mile radius, building on the existing displays in the Heritage Centre, with the aim to increase the understanding and enjoyment of the local countryside among the general public, dealing with all aspects of the history of the landscape, its development, its natural beauty, and man's interaction with the countryside.

The person appointed will be expected to work on an interpretive strategy for the area, which will result in provisions such as trails or on-site material. The Centre already has a design team whose services will be available to the post-holder.

Further details: The Secretary, Weston Civic Society, 3-6 Wadham Street, Weston-Super-Mare, Avon BS23 1JY.

Project Leader, Local Information Service, Penwith
£7,311; Scale 4 pt 18; NJCC conditions; 52 weeks, possible extension to 104 weeks.

Penwith District Council Community Programme seeks a Project Leader to manage its interpretation project. The post-holder will be responsible for a team of part-time researchers, writers and graphic designers engaged in interpreting the history and natural history of the area to the public and schools through the production of leaflets, information panels and exhibitions. A guided walks programme is conducted in the summer.

Candidates should have knowledge and experience of the principles and practice of Countryside Interpretation and the design and production of printed material. Leadership and motivation skills are also required.

Application details: Bruce Macgregor, Agency Manager, Penwith Community programme, Cross Street, Penzance TR18 2EY, Tel: 0736 69409.

PUBLICATIONS

Heritage Communicator

This new international journal will share the inside news, trends, designs, ideas and philosophies on interpretation around the world. It will cost Can $35 for a year's personal subscription to four issues.

Contact: John MacFarlane, Editor, Heritage Communicator, PO Box 1358 Stn M, Calgary, AB T2P2L2, Canada.

ACE News (Audiovisual and Communication on Environment in Europe)

Another new journal, published by the European Centre for Environmental Communication. ACE has identified and will attempt to bridge a gap between nations in a field (television and radio communication) that is beyond national boundaries. Watch out for a new European society of communicators to be launched later this year.

Contact: CECE, 55 Rue de Varenne, F-75341, Paris, France.

Colne Valley Circular and Activities Programme

A new quarterly newsletter to spread the word about the aims and works of the Colne Valley Countryside Management Service, which is a joint Countryside Commission/Kirklees M. C. initiative. The activities programme includes details of guided walks, conservation days and special events.

Details: Colne Valley Steering Group, 3rd Floor, Chantry House, Kirkgate, Wakefield.

Heritage Walking Trails by Roger Lambert and John Cann. Compass Publications

Recipient of a Carnegie Interpret Britain Award last year, this is a series of books to appeal to walkers and lovers of the environment that aims to combine walking with an appreciation of the local heritage of Kent. The first two are in print, and a third is due out now.

Details: Compass Publications, 191 Field Avenue, Canterbury CT1 1TS

Holding Your Ground. An Action Guide to Local Conservation
By Angela King and Sue Clifford. Common Ground

The book explains how people can get to know their own patch, watch out for threats to it, how to enlist help, how to organise, influence, apply pressure, and in the end defeat the forces that may be bigger than them. It includes a series of actual accounts. 326 pages, £5.95 plus 75p p&p.

Details: Common Ground, 45 Shelton St., London WC2H 9HJ

Osborne House; A Practical Handbook for Teachers, and Life on a Royal Estate; A Document Pack for Osborne House
Edited and Produced by Gail Durbin. English Heritage

A pair of very attractive documents which we hope to review in the next issue. The teachers handbook contains background information, a guide to the house, and many activity suggestions, all very clearly laid out, plus some extra themed leaflets. It is about 100 pages and costs £3.75. The document pack includes background information and suggestions as to how to use the facsimile documents, photos etc. it is about 50 pages and costs £2.95.

Contact: English Heritage Store, Building One, Vision Way, Ruislip, HA4 0NZ

Magazine and Journal Production
By Michael Barnard. Blueprint Publishing Ltd.

This is a 274-page ring-bound document that will be updated each year. It costs £32-55 depending how many you order. It is the first introduction to modern techniques of periodical production and contains much valuable information and reference material for use by advertising agencies, publishing managers, print and paper suppliers etc. It is aimed at production and editorial staff.

Details: Blueprint Publishing, 40 Bowling Green Lane, London EC1R ONE

continued on next page

BOOK REVIEW

THE CALDERDALE EXPERIENCE

The Civic Trust is to publish the report by Michael Quinion Associates, "Caring for the Visitor". This was prepared as a contribution to a wider study, "Calderdale - the Challenge: a strategy for Prosperity".

The purposes of producing strategic surveys of potential interpretive projects in an area have been many and varied: avoidance of duplication, identification of themes, allocation of different interpretive tasks, setting of priorities or merely stimulation of interest and activity in interpretation. It is hard to tell what the motives were in this case: Calderdale Borough Council has not undertaken a lot of work in interpretation and whether or not this study serves as a stimulant will remain to be seen. The study is helpful in surveying the possibilities, setting out potential projects in five clear groups and defining four principal requirements of the audience.

In reporting to a metropolitan borough council, the report is up against problems in the comparatively small area that it has to cover. Some existing facilities that happen to lie outside the Borough are either ignored or seen as competition. In some cases this leads to new proposals that would result in some duplication.

Some possibilities for co-ordination across local government boundaries are missed; for instance the large number of Bronte piligims at Haworth that might be attracted to visit the industrial valleys too or the use of existing trusts that could raise funds for interpretation rather that the creation of new ones.

The proposal to market and promote Calderdale as a single destination looks unreal: Calderdale forms part of a wider area, of Lancashire and Yorkshire, dubbed by some the South Pennines with a strong and unitary character. A study that takes in a number of boroughs would be more useful.

These are not major criticisms of what was no doubt a difficult study, if it does no more than stimulate action to find a use for Gibson Mill at Hardcastle Crags, which is apparently still languishing behind its boarded-up windows, then it will have been worthwhile.

Terry Robinson.

FORTHCOMING MEETINGS

30 APRIL 1987

Balancing Your Budget

A practical session at Ironbridge for young professionals in heritage organisations.

Contact: Sue Millar, Institute of Industrial Archaeology, Ironbridge Gorge Museum, Ironbridge, Telford, TF8 7AW.

6-8 MAY 1987

Heritage Education

A conference in Oxford about planning and the historic environment, with a variety of speakers from different backgrounds.

Contact: Local History Course Secretary, Rewlay House, 1 Wellington Square, Oxford OX1 2JA.

7 MAY 1987

Historic Gardens, the 19th and 20th Centuries

Held in Stoke-on-Trent, this is a follow-up to the 1985 course. Part of it will be based at Biddulph Grange, a garden currently being restored by the National Trust, and will deal with study, conservation and re-creation.

Contact: Michael Stratton, Institute of Industrial Archaeology, address as above.

8 MAY 1987

Caring for the Visitor — The Role of the Manager

A Museums Association course to be held in Portsmouth, the aim is to develop management skills by studying the image that is projected to the visitor, and how to motivate staff.

Contact: Mark Taylor, The Museums Association, 34 Bloomsbury Way, London WC1A 2SF.

15-16 MAY 1987

AIM AGM — Independent Museums and Tourism

To be held in Portsmouth, the seminar will look at the practical way in which museums can develop their markets and activities through participation in the tourist industry, and be followed by a series of excursions.

Contact: Association of Independent Museums, Secretary, Museum of East Anglian Life, Stowmarket, Suffolk, IP14 1DL.

18 MAY 1987

Caring for the Visitor — The Role of Attendant Staff

Continuing the Museums Association series started on 8th May, it aims to make attendants more aware of how to satisfy the visitor.

Contact: Mark Taylor, address as above.

19 MAY 1987

Archaeology and the Creation of Jobs

A course at Ironbridge examining some of the key issues facing Manpower Services Commission Project Managers.

Contact: Barrie Trinder, Institute of Industrial Archaeology, address as above.

29 MAY 1987

Selection and Recruitment

A Museums Association course in London.

Contact: Mark Taylor, address as above.

2-4 JUNE 1987

Interpreting Historic Sites: Introductory Course

A skills-based course at Ironbridge designed for those new to historic interpretation, it will include practical working sessions on audio-visual techniques, historic re-enactment and publications.

Contact: Sue Millar, Institute of Industrial Archaeology, address as above.

5 JUNE 1987

Design and Production of Travelling Exhibitions

To be held in London by the Group of Designers and Interpreters in Museums.

Contact: Alan Williams, 24 St Edmunds Rd., Shirley, Southampton

16-17 JUNE 1987

Museums and GCSE

In conjunction with the Group for Education Services in Museums, this conference at Ironbridge aims to bring together museum education officers and teachers to examine resourcing the GCSE exams in the Arts and Humanities through the use of museums. Day 1 focusses on site visits, day 2 on classroom materials.

Contact: Sue Millar, Institute of Industrial Archaeology, address as above.

26 JUNE 1987

Son of George Washington's Axe

Part of a series on the ethics of conservation, this seminar at Stowmarket deals with rural life and agricultural material

Contact: AIM as above.

3-8 JULY 1987

Ecovision 87

The Fourth European Environmental Film Festival. In parallel with the showing of around a hundred films and videos will be information stands, workshops, conferences and events.

Contact: Anne Petrie, Ecovision 87, c/o Central Independent Television, Broad Street, Birmingham B1 2JP.

OCTOBER 1987

Video and Museums

A seminar in London exploring the use of video for displays and cassettes, including practical sessions.

Contact: AIM as above.

Publications (continued)

A London Docklands Guide

By Tony Phillips. Peter Marcan Publications

This new guide helps people to discover through articles and illustrations all the various points of historical and architectural interest often hidden down small side streets. With 64 pages, it costs £6.95 plus 60p postage and packing.

Details: Peter Marcan Publications, 31 Rowliff Rd., High Wycombe, Bucks.

IN THE NEWS

Discovery Refloats

The antarctic exploration ship Discovery was recently put in dry-dock for 7 weeks for restoration work. The hull has been caulked and resealed. So far £38,000 out of an estimated £500,000 has been spent on Discovery's restoration by Dundee Industrial Heritage.

Highland Folk Museum Announce Heritage in Action Days

Winner of a commendation in last year's Carnegie Interpret Britain Award Scheme, the museum is located at Kingussie near Aviemore. These special days will take place on June 2, July 7, August 4 and September 1. On these days, many more activities than the usual one will be taking place, including spinning, handcrafts, woodcarving, blacksmithing, piping, baking, sheering. The Museum also has a new guidebook.

Scottish Museums Council Leisure Learning Programme

The Carnegie UK Trust has grant-aided a new project to promote imaginative programmes such as talks, games, music, field trips etc. to supplement the touring exhibition programme. The events will be marketed to new audiences, especially those who do not presently make full use of museums.

Chatelherault Country Park Visitor Centre

The centrepiece of this Country Park, South of Glasgow, is the restored hunting lodge of the Dukes of Hamilton. The planned interpretation in the adjacent Visitor Centre (opening summer 1987) will recreate a day in 1743 when the Hunting Lodge received its first visitors. The story is told of the construction of the Hunting Lodge by various characters such as the Stonemason and the Forester, each of whom becomes a guide to a trail named after them in the park outside. Consultants are Michael and Sue Thornley.

New Perspex Lamination

Lam-Art Display and Exhibition Services have introduced a service for laminating and sealing artwork, photos etc., behind perspex, providing protection for external interpretive material. The process is ideal for short to medium term displays, and is only a fraction of the price of alternatives such as resin lamination. There is no yellow cast, as with alternative processes, and artwork and photos are actually enhanced. Perspex lamination is also of advantage for internal use where dampness or condensation is a problem.

For further details contact Lam-Art at 2, Enterprise Park, Piddlehinton, Dorchester, DT2 7UA.

Charmouth Heritage Coast Centre

The charitable trust running this had the problem of a damp and unheated building with extremes of temperature. With limited funds and fabrication facilities the exhibition system had to be chosen carefully. Wood was not considered suitable so Foamex expanded rigid PVC sheeting was chosed because it was dimensionally stable, would not support mould growth, and is vapour-(and therefore condensation) resistant. It was supported on a timber framework. The artwork was cold-bonded to the foamex and laminated, so keeping maintenance costs down. In its first season 18,000 people visited the Centre, and the system has stood up well.

Foamex is imported by Michael Freeman Products, Foamex House, 267/8 Argyll Avenue, Slough, Berks SL1 4HE.

First Parish Map

Common Ground established a project in 1986 to encourage local communities to produce maps of their parishes, in any medium, as a means of helping people learn about the views of their fellow parishioners, and preserve features that are illustrated. By last August, over 45 maps were in progress and the first to be finished was Buckland Newton. A series of eight maps have been temporarily displayed in the village hall, and are now permanently displayed in a new set of curtains made for the hall.

For more details, including a leaflet contact Tom Greeves, Common Ground, London Ecology Centre, 45 Shelton Street, London WC2H 9HJ with sae. Common Ground exists to promote the importance of cultural heritage — common plants and animals, familiar and local places and links with the past.

Oklahoma Takeover for Cogges Farm Museum?

Oxfordshire County Council is thinking of privatising the museum, and has been considering submissions from two companies, one local and one from Oklahoma. The American company has a range of sports and leisure interests, including the new sports stadium in the London Docklands. The local bidder is a theatrical company which has already done several events at the farm.

All this has forced the County Museum Service to revise its own plans, including reducing by half the cost estimate for restoring the buildings, and a restructuring of the management. The collection belongs to the Museum Service, some bought with grant aid from the V and A, and could not be transferred to a private body.

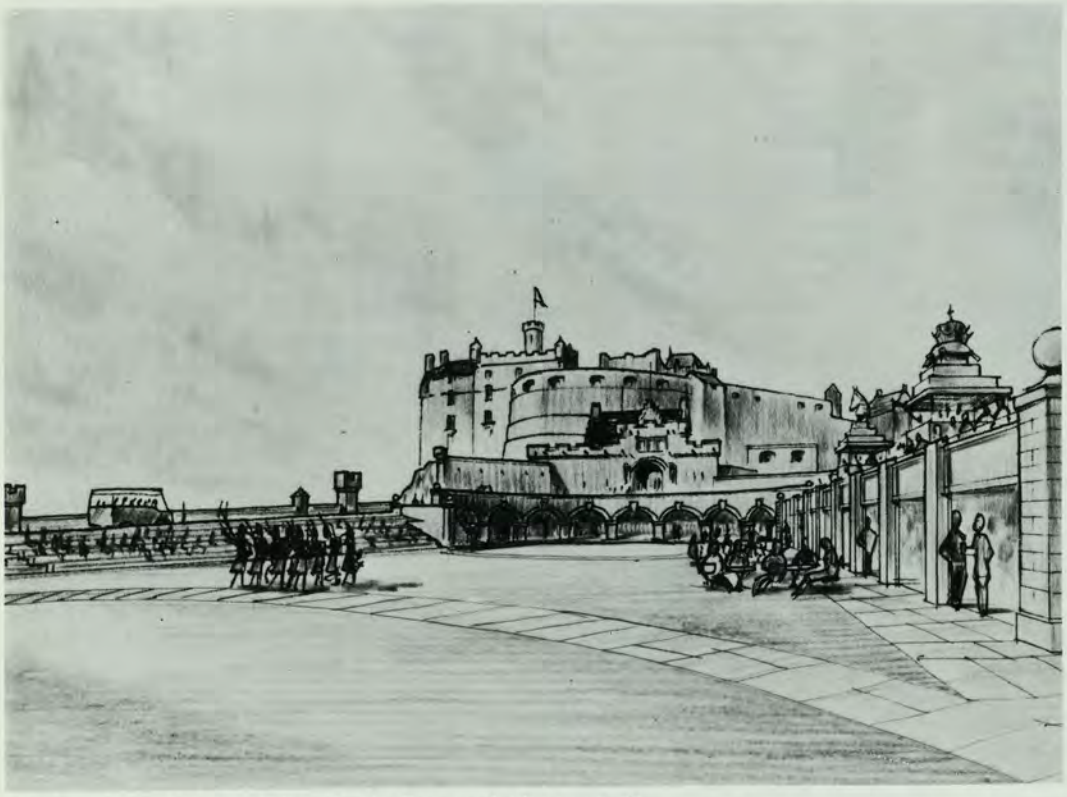
Timebase Southampton — An Adventure in History

Heritage projects, Peat Marwick and Mitchell and The Alex Gordon partnership have produced a £40,000 study for Hampshire County Council. A new Timebase-Centre — a shop window for Southampton's treasures — would form a hub and link between a number of Timebase-Outstations, each evoking a particular period. Every period in Southampton's history is represented by existing historic buildings and museums, though a Saxon settlement would have to be recreated, which could become an internationally famous open air museum.

A new tranport system of small electric transporters is proposed to link the sites in the Old Town, while a tramway is suggested for the docks area. In addition, an elevated system would link all sites, car parks etc. The cost of the package could vary between £11 and 33m.

Medieval Courses in Gloucestershire

Tan House is a Medieval field study centre which has just announced a series of courses for 1987, including titles such as a Romanesque weekend. Most courses last three or four days and details can be obtained from Christie Arno, Tan House Farm, Newland, Wyedean, Glos. GL16 8NP.



Edinburgh Castle Feasibility Study Proposal (See page 2)

The Society for the Interpretation of Britain's Heritage

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

The Society was formed in 1975 to:

* provide a forum for discussion and exchange of ideas on the interpretation of Britain's Heritage, both urban and rural;

* disseminate knowledge of interpretive philosophy, principles and techniques;

*promote the value and role of interpretation to those involved with recreation management, conservation, education, tourism, and public relations in national and local government, charitable bodies and private organisations.

Annual subscription rates; Individual UK £9.00, Library £6.00, Corporate £25.00, Student £5.00. Overseas £9.00 (£12.00 airmail).

Committee of the Society

CHAIRMAN:
Ian Parkin
4 Holmewood Close,
Kenilworth,
Warwickshire,
CV8 2JE
Tel (H) 0926 54232

VICE-CHAIRMAN AND ACTING EDITOR:
Ruth Tillyard
62 Russell Drive,
Bearsden,
Glasgow,
G61 3BB
Tel (H) (041) 9423933

VICE-CHAIRMAN (Desc):
Terry Lee (Professor)
Dept of Psychology,
University of Surrey,
Guildford,
Surrey
GU5 0PB
Tel (Wk) (0483) 571281 ex.418

SECRETARY:
Bill Lanning
10 Priory Crescent,
Lewes,
East Sussex,
BN7 1HP
Tel (H) (0273) 472970
(Wk) (0273) 475400

TREASURER:
Graeme McLearie
53 Hatfield Place,
Peterlee,
Co. Durham
Tel (Wk) (0429) 836533

EVENTS SECRETARY:
Tim Laker
Royal Victoria Country Park,
Netley Abbey,
Southampton
SO3 5GA
Tel (Wk) (0703) 451156
(H) (0730) 67605

MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY:
Andrew Jenkinson
Bircher Cottage,
Little Stretton,
Shropshire,
SY6 6RE
Tel (H) (0694) 722223

PUBLICITY OFFICER:
Ian Solly
16 Belvoir Crescent,
Langar,
Nottingham,
NG13 9HU
Tel (H) (0949) 60772
(Wk) (0623) 823202

PUBLICATIONS OFFICER:
Bill Breakell
Bo'ness Heritage Trust,
Bo'ness Station,
Union Street,
Bo'ness,
Nr. Falkirk, Scotland
Tel (H) (0506) 826476
(Wk) (0506) 825855

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