

# HERITAGE INTERPRETATION

THE SOCIETY FOR THE  
INTERPRETATION OF  
BRITAIN'S HERITAGE

NO 37



*Is Finn McCool turning in his grave now that his role in building the Giant's Causeway is challenged?  
(Photo N. Ireland Tourist Board).*

Issue 37 of your Journal examines the scene in N. Ireland, which this year played host to the Autumn Conference and Carnegie Awards Ceremony.

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LATE NEWS ON CARNEGIE AWARDS

# THE CAUSEWAY EXPERIENCE

DON WILMONT

Chief Tourism/Recreation Officer, Moyle District.

In the past, people needed myths to explain the more mysterious of Nature's phenomena - today we provide them with Interpretation!

Legend has it that the Giant's Causeway was created by the Irish Giant Finn McCool in order to get across to Scotland to do battle with his rival Bannandonner, but when Finn saw the Scottish giant he had second thoughts about tackling such a giant and he dressed himself in baby clothes and took refuge in a crib. When Bannandonner saw him he retreated post haste to Scotland smashing the Causeway behind him, not wishing to meet the father of such a mighty bairn! Hence the connection with the columns in Fingal's Cave on the Isle of Staffa off the coast of Scotland! (Now you know why the Irish are such lovely story tellers).

In fact the Causeway was formed as a result of volcanic activity which changed the face of Western Europe some 55 or 60 million years ago, and because the deep pools of lava cooled very slowly and evenly rather like the mud in the bottom of a dried out pond, these strange formations made up of columnar basalt were formed.

The Giant's Causeway is an area incorporating not only these strange basalt shapes to which the Giant Finn McCool has given fanciful names such as the Giant's Boot and the Giant's Organ but also includes approximately 5 miles of the most spectacular coastline in Europe with some very fine examples of flora, fauna and birdlife. This area of coastline with its unique features and coastal paths is cared for by the National Trust and earlier this year was designated a 'World Heritage Site' by UNESCO following a submission by the Department of Environment for N.I. Conservation Branch. The Causeway is undoubtedly Ireland's top tourist attraction but it is now accepted that it also has a universal value in terms of natural heritage and could perhaps be known officially as the eighth wonder of the world, a mantle which in the eyes of local people, has adorned it for many years.

It was against this background that plans were made to build a Visitors Centre at the Giant's Causeway and in 1968 the former Antrim County Council vested lands at the Causeway for this purpose. The wheels of local government turn ever slowly and in 1973 following a review of local government in N. Ireland and the creation of new local authorities, Moyle District

Council was formed and one of its legacies was the vested lands and the plans for a visitor's centre at the Causeway.

A committee representing all the interested parties was formed and the idea of a visitor's centre began to move a little closer to be stopped abruptly in its tracks just prior to public tender by a public spending axe of the newly elected Conservative administration.



Giant's Causeway Centre, Co. Antrim. (Photo: Northern Ireland Tourist Board).

This set-back in my opinion proved to be a blessing in disguise in that it took the committee out of a potentially very embarrassing situation.

The proposed centre was very close to going to tender and the committee was having difficulty in commissioning an interpretive designer because the plans for the building were at such an advanced stage and no consultation had taken place between the designer and the architect. When the plans were resurrected in 1982, the original building concept was scrapped and a designer was appointed, an initial outline of the methods of interpretation agreed, and then an architect was commissioned. The designer, Robin Wade was appointed in April 1983 with the contractor not starting work on the site until June 1984 giving the design team some 14 months start on the build. I hasten to add that the scrapping of the original plans was in no way the fault of the architect who designed them, just quite simply in my view a case of putting the cart before the horse!

The building was completed at a cost of approximately £1 million and was officially opened on 29th May 1986 some 19 years after the lands were first vested! The project had 75% funding from the

Department of Economic Development Tourism Branch, 7% from the European Regional Development Fund with the balance being borne by the local ratepayer.

The architect for the project was A. Berzins, who took a very sympathetic approach to the surrounding environment and who most importantly had worked with the designer on previous schemes, thereby making many of the on-site problems much easier to solve.

The facilities at the Centre include an audio visual theatre, an interpretation and exhibition area, a restaurant, a tourist information point and three souvenir shops. The largest of the shops and the 90-seat restaurant are leased to and run by the National Trust who, as I have said earlier, look after the Causeway and the associated cliff paths. The two smaller shops are leased to tenants by means of public tender.

The exhibition includes a full scale model of the world's first hydro electric tram which operated from Portrush to the Giant's Causeway between 1883 and 1949, plus displays about the geology, flora and fauna of the area, birdlife, local events, history, quotes by the famous and not so

famous people on seeing the stones and the wrecks of the Girona, a Spanish Galleas wrecked off the Causeway in a gale in 1588. The interpretation is completed with what for me is the highlight of a visit to the Causeway, a 24 minute audio visual show produced by Perpetual Photophonics who were appointed after a delegation had been to England on a fact finding trip to view some of their work. The theatre can accommodate 54 people in very comfortable surroundings and the show runs every half hour throughout the day. The show is a 9 projector system with 730 slides, the 9 projectors being kept cool by an air chill filtration unit installed in the projection room. The projectors generate some 3 Kws of heat and the chill filtration unit has proved to be very effective in extending the bulb life of the projectors, in fact 2 projectors in the main interpretive area have used more bulbs than the 9 projectors in the Audio Visual Show!

The installation of two C.C. T.V. cameras and a show start button at the Reception counter has enabled the Reception Staff to see the audience in the theatre, start the show automatically, and keep a check for any misconduct during the performance. This has helped in the overall staffing levels and has cut out the need for staff to go to the theatre to make checks, thereby interrupting the show with doors opening and closing.

The centre opens 7 days each week throughout the year, with the exception of Christmas week. and readers who operate a 7 day week facility will know that the problems in relation to shifts, holidays and sickness cover are very many times greater than that of a 5 day week opening system. The National Trust close their shop and restaurant in mid November and re-open in March each year, so the winter months operate on reduced opening hours and with a reduced level of facilities available, but it is quite surprising the number of people who visit the Causeway even in the depths of winter. Indeed on 29th December last year visitors from eight different countries signed the visitors book at Reception.

By the end of September this year the centre had attracted some 260,000 visitors and we are hopeful that over 300,000 visitors will have visited the Giant's Causeway before the end of the year. Such large numbers of people create their own problems of car parking, toilets, litter etc., with litter probably being the worst. The centre has the equivalent of 51 domestic bins and we have a twice weekly collection; this doesn't take into account the litter generated by the private tenants! Keeping the site clean is, in my view, one of the priorities of day-to-day management. Attracting visitors to a facility is a process of public relations and publicity but ensuring that they go away with a favourable impression is a different matter. The visitor won't remember much of your



A Corner of the Exhibition Area



Restaurant (Both photographs: Northern Ireland Tourist Board).

£1 million facility with its elaborate interpretation if all he can think of is that the toilets were dirty!

This brings me to my particular hobby horse, the attitude of staff towards the general public. You only get one opportunity to make a first impression and once again the visitor's experience can be spoiled by a member of staff who perhaps got out of bed the wrong side that morning or who perhaps has not received adequate, or indeed any, training!

I certainly don't think I have any staff like that at the Causeway, but I seem to spend more and more of my time ensuring that the staff are aware of what is happening in the centre and are familiar with the needs of the visitor and capable of servicing those needs. After all, a good

manager is only as good as the performance of his staff when he isn't there to look over their shoulder! Staff training and staff attitudes have been sadly lacking in some of the centres that I have visited during the last year and I feel this is an area which needs an awful lot of attention, and I am pleased to see that steps are being taken within the 'Interpretation Industry' to put staff training on a more professional footing.

## DERRY INVESTS IN HERITAGE

BOB McMILLEN

Planning and Projects Manager, N. Ireland Tourist Board.

Where in the world are they building a new railway station for steam trains and a stone fort designed to attract invaders rather than repel them? If these questions seem improbable it's only because you may not be aware of one of the province's biggest potential tourism resources.

If we asked 'Where in the province is there an historic city with a long, exciting and well-documented history and an intact set of walls?' would that give you a clue?

Everybody knows the bad news about Londonderry, the province's second city - high unemployment, depression and all the rest of it - but on the tourism front, major changes are taking place.

Since local government reorganisation Derry City Council had not treated tourism as one of its priorities. However, during the last few years, with assistance from Government and EEC Funds, major progress has been made on the tourism front.

Everyone knew the City was interesting but no-one was sure of the best way to develop it. Clearly any initiative had not only to attract visitors but also had to tie in with the need to protect what was good on the ground. A number of tourist attractions already existed - it was a walled city, the architecture was of interest, buildings like the Guildhall and St.

Columb's Cathedral were unique and of a high quality. Likewise there was a considerable history to the town - not just the siege which everyone had heard about but the pre-siege history of the town, its importance as an industrial centre and port, its role as a 'regional' capital and so on.

The first tourism scheme to appear on the ground was the Tourist Information Centre in Foyle Street. This was a necessary development, providing a focal point for visitors to call to obtain information, book beds and get directions, but it did not in any way satisfy the need to tell the story of the City and provide visitors with places that helped to illustrate that story.

A commitment was given to proceed with two major tourism schemes. The first - the Foyle Valley Railway Scheme - had been considered previously but it was not possible to get a site. Second time round a site was found upstream of the Craigavon Bridge on the West bank.

Work has been under way for some time on the construction of a railway station which will house displays based on the city's importance as a centre of communications. Apart from a regularly changing series of displays it is intended to run steam trains from the station along the bank of the River Foyle and visitors will be able to see the trains in operation and see maintenance and overhauling of the rolling stock by members of the local Railway Society.

The Railway Station building is attractive in appearance and built to a high standard. It includes an outside platform with two more inside, a workshop area, shop, a viewing gallery, exhibition area and display area. Trains will actually run in and through the station, bringing the whole building to life and giving it the feel of an original station with the noise and smells of steam railways.

The second major scheme is a five storey stone fort just inside the walls near the Guildhall. The fort's purpose is to act as 'storyteller' of the history of the City, using all kinds of interpretive methods like displays and audio visual material to explain what you can see and, of course, encourage visitors into the town.

The site for the fort required a building that was special. While it had to be physically large enough to provide display space it also had to blend in with the surrounding Listed Buildings and monuments.

In the end, the decision was taken that, instead of trying to hide the building by constructing something bland and

inoffensive, it would be better if the building itself could be sufficiently unusual to be a tourist attraction in its own right. So far it has certainly attracted a great deal of attention from onlookers but only next year, when it opens to the public, will we discover what visitors think. To build the fort in the traditional way would have been prohibitively expensive so it was decided to improvise. The building is stone clad around a modern frame design and has been built in such a way that the public will not notice anything unusual. Even the windows have been specially detailed to make the walls appear to be the correct thickness.

Like the Railway Station the fitting out of the fort is well under way and will open for the 1988 season. The Council, conscious of the need to ensure proper management and development of the Fort as well as a co-ordinated approach to developing, displaying and marketing 'the historic City' as a tourist product, has now appointed an officer - Brian Lacey - with a background in this field, to oversee the development and fitting out of the exhibitions.

The Council plans to develop the Fort to cover the City's history during various periods, with the oldest - Doire Calgach to Colmille, 546 AD - the first to face the visitor on entering the building. A journey through the fort then brings the visitor up to more modern periods, covering the Viking and Norman invasions and the development of the Irish Chieftains; the Plantation; the building of the Cathedral and Walls and the siege; then finally on to the Georgian period illustrating the character of many of the City's significant buildings and reflecting on the commercial development of the City at the time.

At the same time, progress is also being made on other fronts. St Columb's Cathedral, situated within the walls, attracts some 10,000 visitors a year. On display are a number of historic documents and artefacts and, just recently, a new audio visual presentation was launched. Organised by the Cathedral Support group, with grant assistance from the Northern Ireland Tourist Board, a slide tape presentation about the Cathedral is now on show in the Chapter Room.

Londonderry City now provides shopping, culture, entertainment and history. When the new Railway Station and Fort open for business the city will have two more powerful attractions providing extra reasons to visit in the first place and something worthwhile to visit if you're there anyway.



The Walls of Londonderry  
(Photo: N. Ireland Tourist Board).



Photo Call for the workers on the top of the O'Doherty Fort.

(Photo: Northern Ireland Tourist Board)

## EXPLORING THE PAST OF ULSTER FOLK

PHILIPPA REID

Northern Ireland Tourist Board

A perusal through history books is the nearest most people get to finding out how their ancestors lived. But if you're visiting Northern Ireland and fancy a blast into the past, just take a short car ride out of Belfast and step into a world that's long since disappeared.

A world of thatched cottages, rough white washed walls, of byre houses and weavers' looms, jamb walls, spade mills and much much more sits waiting to be rediscovered and marvelled over at the Ulster Folk Museum in Cultra, Co. Down.

The museum has been there for quite a while - opened to the public in 1964 but its buildings are much older than that. And that's because all except one were brought stone by stone and straw by straw from their original site in the Ulster countryside.

Imagine a gigantic three-dimensional painting-by-numbers and you have the folk museum. Take the Ballyveridagh National School which actually stood near Ballycastle in Co. Antrim, about 65 miles away, from 1837 onwards - it was dismantled and each stone carefully numbered and then re-erected in the same sequence at Cultra.

The exception is the weaver's house. And it's a replica of a house in Ballydugan townland. The original remains steadfastly where it's always stood because its walls are of packed earth, and even those determined souls at the museum had to

concede to the impossibility of tearing down mud walls to rebuild them again.

It is said that when the Northern Ireland Parliament voted to set up the folk museum in 1958, it was the only issue both sides of the House ever agreed upon! So with all



Everyone's image of a Folk Museum

(Photo: N. Ireland Tourist Board).

sections of the community smiling on it, the museum came into being, acquired its first outdoor exhibit in 1961 and opened its doors - or rather, gates - three years later.

Its brief was to display the traditions of the people of Ulster, past and present - and it had 136 acres, formerly belonging to the Kennedys, a Planter family, and their manor house in which to do that.

On those acres now are all kinds of buildings typical of the 1800's - like the National School, where if children were segregated at all it was by means of sex, not religion; the Lisrace Forge, where a blacksmith still practises his craft in front of hundreds of curious school children; Gorticashel Flax Mill; Coalisland Spade Mill which now houses a spade museum; the Bleach Green Watch Hut from Tullylish; the Ballydugan Weaver's house, half of it taken up by the loom; and the Duncrun Cottier's House, one of the simplest of Ulster homes, and the very first of the museum's exhibits.

There are all kinds of farmhouses, taken from the most poverty-stricken hills to the wealthier lowlands. And what the museum is doing now is reconstructing the landscape around each of these properties just as it was in the particular corner of Ulster from which the building came.

The result, according to Andy Anderson in the museum's education department, is a microcosm of the Ulster landscape, where

visitors can pass through all the counties of Ulster on just a few acres.

The museum comes one step closer to reality by farming the land around the building using 19th century methods - and there are acres of unspoilt fields now yielding potatoes or barley. It's a big attraction at potato harvest to watch the Irish Draught or Clydesdale horse patiently treading the ground with the plough.

There are other traditions being kept alive - like the old method of making candles. The results may not all be uniform in size or straight in line but there's no doubt they work! And bread-baking too - the smell of griddle soda breads often wafts out of Corradreenan West Farmhouse. It's here at the folk museum that many children have their first chance to bake bread.

Under the eye of their teacher and armed with their own ingredients, school parties spend a morning in one of the farmhouses learning to bake the traditional way, and their lunchtime sampling the results. The record is held by a Belfast school teacher who in one morning baked 14 different breads and cakes, churned butter and made jam, with only four children as assistants!

Ulster's town dwellers haven't been ignored by the museum either. An urban village, if there can be such a thing, is springing up in a corner of the estate. Already sitting there as if they'd been there all along are two terraces of suburban houses - one, the Tea Lane Kitchen houses from the Sandy Row area of Belfast, dating from 1832; and the other Meeting Street, formerly of Dromore, Co. Down.

Most of the houses are of a very basic very small two-up two-down variety with a completely enclosed back yard, and would no doubt send many tenants screaming in search of the rural thatch and peasant way of life.

But for others urbanisation represented sophistication, and commerce and industry the path to a glorious future. Here in Meeting Street a cobbler's shop is open in summer, while above the shop an exhibition explains the shoe-making process.

Of course every village has to have its church - or churches - pub and shops. The Kilmorse Church of Ireland from Crossgar now dominates the skyline above the village. The rest should appear later.

Meanwhile for those weary of walking the 136 acres, a new folk gallery provides the inside view on life a century and more ago. Designed so that the disabled have easy access, its two floors display permanent exhibitions of dairying, furniture, ranges and hearth equipment, chairs, laundry and lighting; and also of tillage, sowing, harvest and livestock. Temporary exhibitions of textiles, arts and crafts are also staged there.

And there are plenty of plans for the future - to turn the manor house into an educational centre; to build a visitors' reception centre with auditorium, conference hall, restaurant, shops; and to set up an internal transport system for those less agile devotees of the past.

Talking about transport, anyone interested in looking at other methods of transportation of the past besides blistered feet need only walk a few more yards to come to the Transport Museum on an adjoining site. It was amalgamated with the folk museum in 1967.

The folk museum is open all year round and costs adults 30 pence, children 10

pence and disabled people nothing to spend as long as they like there. Ulster has plenty to be thankful for, that on that historic occasion in 1958 its parliamentary representative agreed for once to agree!

For further information on the museum, contact the Ulster Folk and Transport Museum, Cultra, Co. Down. Tel: Hollywood 5411.



Farmhouse at Ulster Folk Museum, Cultra. (All Photos: Northern Ireland Tourist Board).



Three cheers for school parties.



Reaping in the traditional way at the Folk Museum.

## OLD BUSHMILLS DISTILLERY - THE VISITOR CENTRE

The distillery at Bushmills, County Antrim provided an unusual setting for one session of SIBH's Autumn Conference.

The Visitors Centre at 'Old Bushmills' consists of the Potstill Bar and the two Distillery Shops.

The Potstill Bar was formerly the malt kilns which used peat and coke as fuel for drying malt. Now it is a link between the old and new. Not only is it a unique bar, it is also a museum, tourist centre and a reminder of the long history of 'Old Bushmills' since Sir Thomas Phillips was granted a Licence to Distil in 1608.

The old kiln furnaces are now used to exhibit various artifacts of past days at the Distillery. The walls are a silent witness to the many thousands of visitors who come to the Distillery each year - visitors can leave their mark by pin-pointing their home town on the world map or maybe leave a plaque of the organisation they represent or a pennant or flag of their country.

The word whiskey itself derives from the Gaelic 'Uisce Beatha' meaning water of life.

It is significant then that the water involved in the distillation of 'Old Bushmills' still comes from the same source today as it did when the distillery first started.

This water has its own special 'character' because it both rises in peaty ground and

also flows over basalt.

So the two basic contributors to the distinctive 'Old Bushmills' flavour are the barley, which is grown locally and specially malted to the distillery's own specifications and the water from the distillery's own private supply - St. Columb's Rill, a tributary of the River Bush, which runs past the distillery.

In the world of whiskey, tradition and

experience reign absolute.

But no other distillery can call on such a wealth of tradition and experience as 'Old Bushmills'.

Historical reference to distillation at 'Old Bushmills' can be traced back to 1494 and even further to 1276.

The Original Grant to distil is dated 1608 - only two generations after malting historically began to be used in connection with whiskey. Quite simply, 'Old Bushmills' is the oldest distillery in the world.

That pedigree is fully reflected in the whiskey which comes from the distillery.

While enjoying a sample of 'Old Bushmills' after their tour of the Distillery, visitors can look at the many items of interest around the walls.

They may also visit the Souvenir Shop which sells some 80 different items logo-marked with 'Old Bushmills' and the Spirit Safe, attractively finished in brass and smoked glass, which sells 'Black Bush' and 'Bushmills Malt' in a variety of special gift packs, unique to The 'Old Bushmills' Distillery.

The Potstill Bar has a character all its own and has merited many tourist awards. It was awarded the British Airways Tourism Endeavour Award for 'Providing a first-class reception centre and superb hospitality' - a fitting end to the 'Story of Bushmills'.

Ten years ago the Distillery welcomed about 5,000 visitors a year, all on pre-arranged tours. In 1987 it hopes to reach the 50,000 mark and will then be at full stretch. Nobody currently pays for admission and, in fact, the visitor service is subsidised, notwithstanding income from sales. Plans are being drawn up for better facilities to smooth the flow of visitors but the management will be at pains to ensure that such improvements are not at the expense of the intimacy and hospitality which make the place so memorable.



(Photo: Northern Ireland Tourist Board).



Reception Area at Old Bushmills Distillery.

(Photo: Northern Ireland Tourist Board).

# INTERPRETATION AND THE NATIONAL TRUST IN NORTHERN IRELAND

JO WHATMOUGH

*Countryside Manager, National Trust.*

As in any other Region of the National Trust, the variety of its properties in Northern Ireland ranges from the impressive to the cosy, be it stately home, or coastal village, wooden glen or spectacular cliffs, and includes some of the best coastline of the British Isles. All good candidates for Interpretation.

Unfortunately, as in many aspects of life, the 'troubles' in Northern Ireland, have had a profound influence especially on the tourist industry. When the rapid expansion of countryside recreation and the development of Interpretation was really taking off in Britain in the 1970's, here a 'real' tourist was a rare animal indeed. Until recently the average tourist would be from the one and a half million residents of Northern Ireland, and probably on one of several repeat visits. The interpretation of Trust properties has had to take this into account.

Houses and other buildings of the Trust have always, where possible, been interpreted by the guided walk, or tour of the house which can readily be focussed at what ever level or interest the group may be, be it primary school children or antique collectors. Other forms of interpretive material are often developed as packs for educational groups, but do not always make the sideways movement and adjustments to make them available for

estate has been adapted for general use, particularly with families in mind. There is now offered such a variety of activity that several repeat visits would be necessary to complete them all, and by organising differently themed events each summer, the problems of continuing to interest the regular visitor have successfully been overcome.

Indeed Castleward is the most popular of the Trust's houses and estates, and is being used as a model for the development of similar facilities, though individually tailored, at other properties. Castleward now offers a visitor centre with exhibitions, and an estate guide. The tour of the house now includes a self-guided section through the servants quarters, where 'wax' figures can be seen at work in the kitchens, laundry etc. There is also a Victorian nursery furnished with all manner of toys and games to be played with.

A Family Day is organised each summer, when the theme is taken from different historical periods. Several craft fairs are held throughout the summer, and a wide variety of countryside activities are available on the estate. Guided walks' topics range from the old landscapes and their management, to close looks at the water life of the estate's lakes and ponds.

Nature games are organised for families and children throughout the spring and

national and international importance. Sites which in Britain would, in the past, have been handed over to the Nature Conservancy Council, or a County Naturalists Trust to manage and interpret. In fact Ireland's first nature reserve was established by the Trust in 1967, at Murlough National Nature Reserve in County Down. Since when it has been actively involved in Nature conservation and education.

Open space properties offer a considerable challenge to the Interpreter, namely to maintain the very beauty, wildness and nature conservation value of a site, whilst at the same time encouraging access and promoting the enjoyment and understanding of the place to an ever-increasing number of visitors.

Interpretation at many sites has intentionally often been kept very low key. The first nature trails either as leaflets or panels were produced in 1970, European Conservation Year, for four sites, the Giants Causeway, Whitepark Bay, Murlough and Strangford Lough. All of these sites are of national or international importance as scientific sites. Their interests range from the dramatic geology of the Giants Causeway to the low drumlin landscapes of Strangford Lough, with its internationally important numbers of breeding and wintering wildfowl and from the chalk grasslands and cliffs of Whitepark Bay to the ancient archaeologically rich sand dunes of Murlough.

Each site poses a different set of problems, reflected in the strategies adopted to date. Murlough's dunes system is probably one of the most heavily visited recreational amenities in Northern Ireland, recording over 250,000 visitors a year. Yet apart from a considerable number of educational visits made by schools, the majority of visitors use the site merely for its recreational potential, and access to the best beach in Northern Ireland. Few are interested in the dunes themselves, or their wildlife. Being a fragile sand dune site, here especially the number of visitors poses a considerable management problem. Interpretation was initially seen as a useful management tool by which the visitor might be informed about the management which was taking place, and hopefully might also be made more aware of the intrinsic value of the site. A panel nature trail was in place along the main access route from 1970 to 1973. But like many such forms of interpretation, it did not cater for the regular visitor, and had considerable drawbacks in the interpretation of natural history, which is

seasonal, has a habit of moving around, and all but the most obvious specimens are difficult to find by the casual uninformed observer.

To overcome some of these problems, display cases were erected at each entrance, whose contents, including specimens as well as two dimensional exhibits, were regularly changed. The response to these led to the establishment of a regular guided walks programme in 1975, which now covers a wide range of topics, and is led by experienced and knowledgeable wardens, who can respond to those unexpected and immediate occurrences so often met with on a nature reserve. Acclimatisation techniques are used where appropriate. The aim of these walks being to give an enjoyable, real experience of natural history to the visitor, whilst acquiring a better appreciation of what the site is all about. In the Trust's estimation the guided walk is unsurpassed as the medium for the interpretation of open spaces, and is now being used on properties throughout Northern Ireland, including gardens and estates.

The guided walk programme at Murlough now extends from May to the following January. It has been further supplemented by residential Wildlife Weekends, a Nature club, a leaflet series and a small visitor centre.

In the mid-1970's, a considerable discussion took place as to the appropriateness of constructing a large custom-built visitor centre on the reserve. It was a very tempting thought, but the decision was made against doing so. The major argument being that the objectives of managing the site as a National Reserve might be compromised if a very successful visitor centre were provided as this would inevitably attract even more visitors. We shall never know what impact it might have had; however, it is very interesting to watch the effects of the newly built visitor centre at the Giants Causeway opened in 1986.

The Giants Causeway, now a World Heritage site as well as a National Nature

Reserve, is in fact only a relatively small section of the north Antrim coastline under the care of the National Trust. All of which is of outstanding landscape and nature conservation value as well as of considerable local history interest. For here are tales to be told of giants, castles and wrecked ships of the Spanish Armada. The interpretation strategy adopted by the Trust on this superb coastline has been to concentrate the main thrust in the Giant's Causeway centre, which acts as the magnet for most of the visitors to the Antrim coast. Here in the interpretive scheme developed jointly with the Moyle District Council, using funds provided by the Northern Ireland Trust Board, the whole of the north coast is covered, from the Bushmills whisky distillery, to the remote and magical Murlough Bay (not to be confused with the Co. Down Murlough, which it often is). Thus the wild and remote places can remain so, whilst information about them is available for those that wish to know. Guided walks are again an important part of the strategy, and will soon be available on most of the Trust's properties in Co. Antrim. Two small visitor centres supplement this scheme, one in an old quarry building at Larrybane, interpreting the dramatic rope bridge of Carrick-a-rede, its salmon fishery, and the colony of cliff nesting sea birds. A similar small centre is found in the village at Cushendun.

The impact of the main centre is already being felt, with over 300,000 visitors recorded in the first year, but are there signs that the experience of the centre is replacing that of actually visiting the stones themselves?

Strangford Lough, due to its size, nearly three quarters that of the Isle of Man, with a coastline over 90 miles long, poses considerable problems in the siting of interpretation facilities. A similar strategy to that used on the North coast has been adopted, and a visitor centre is at present under construction at Castleward, on the shores of the Lough. Information panels will also be placed in car parks and at bird watching hides around the lough shore.

Guided walks are more of a problem, but together with their watery equivalent, boat trips, have been successfully running since 1985.

What does the future hold? Certainly not stagnation, for in Northern Ireland we are committed Interpreters, hoping to expand many of the things which have already proved to be so successful such as guided walks and wildlife holiday weekends in different parts of the province. Living history projects, including a Bronze age reconstruction and craft fair at Murlough are on the cards, sponsorship forthcoming. A permanent living history project is shortly to commence at the glorious high Victorian Crown Bar in the centre of Belfast, where appropriate food such as Guinness and oysters are to be served by staff dressed in period costume. Even the beer mats are to be used as Interpretive material. Cheers!

## NEW INTERPRETATION AT BANNOCKBURN HERITAGE CENTRE

MYRA LAWSON

*National Trust for Scotland.*

A new motorway service station can occasionally bring unexpected benefits to its near neighbours.

Bannockburn Heritage Centre owned by the National Trust for Scotland, lies some 2 miles south of Stirling near the Pirnhall junction of the M80/M9 motorways. Since a major redevelopment in 1981, the Trust had shared the Centre with an information service provided by the Scottish Tourist Board. When it was decided that the new Granada service station at Pirnhall should include a tourist information centre, the need to provide such information at Bannockburn declined, and the STB withdrew in favour of the Stirling and Trossachs Tourist Board's establishing a new centre as part of the motorway complex.

Prior to this re-organisation, interpretation at Bannockburn had centred largely on the battle itself, using a 3-projector tape/slide show. The departure of the tourist information service - and subsequent generous grant aid from the Scottish Tourist Board - enabled the Trust to expand and improve its interpretation, and to create at Bannockburn displays worthy of a 'Heritage Centre'.

Victory at Bannockburn in 1314 (when the Scots under Robert Bruce defeated the English forces commanded by Edward II) consolidated Bruce's position as King of Scots, and went a long way towards unifying the varied peoples who had settled in Scotland through the ages. The Trust therefore chose to feature Scottish history from the time of the Wars of Independence until 1603 (when, on the death of Elizabeth, James VI of Scotland became



Modelled figures of Cook and Kitchen Maid at Castleward. (Photo: National Trust)

other visitors. The educational material developed at the fine 'Strawberry Hill' Gothic house and estate at Castleward in County Down won the Sandford award in 1981 and 1987. From the early 1980's this material, interpreting both house and

summer, and self-guided wayfaring games are available throughout the year.

The National Trust has retained the management and interpretation of all its countryside properties in Northern Ireland including nature conservation sites of



Giant's Causeway

(Photo: National Trust)

James I of England) and to title the new displays 'The Kingdom of the Scots'.

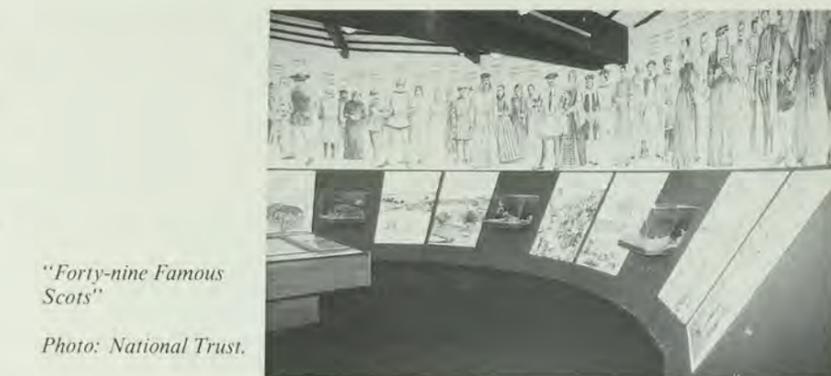
Dr Annette Smith of Dundee University, who had helped the Trust three years ago over revised interpretation at Culloden, was again engaged as consultant historian. It was decided to divide the main displays into ten areas, covering different subjects. Dr Smith soon provided valuable historical information from which Trust staff selected the final copy; at the same time research was carried out for suitable illustrations.

It may appear to casual students of Scottish history that in the Middle Ages, the country lurched from one battle to the next, and certainly the visitor's introduction to the Bannockburn displays seems to fuel that point of view. On entering the Centre, you are confronted by a life-sized armoured figure of William Wallace, 13th century Scottish freedom fighter and victor over the English Army at the Battle of Stirling Bridge (1297). Beside the warrior is a scale model of the battle designed and executed by Charles Wesencraft of Ponteland. And there is more bloodshed to come - in the AV programme 'The Battle of Bannockburn', produced for the Trust some 5 years ago and featuring fine original drawings by Jim Proudfoot, now Head of the Trust's Studio staff. The interior of the auditorium has been vastly improved by colourful heraldic banners, specially made by Dr Patrick Barden of Switzerland and partly funded by a generous donation from the Stirling Members' Centre of the Trust. Dr Barden has made, free of charge, some fine flags to grace the outside of the Centre.

As the visitor progresses through the exhibition, it becomes abundantly clear that many Scots used their hands and minds for purposes other than warfare. The Trust has been fortunate to obtain, on extended loan from the Royal Museum of Scotland, some magnificent original and replica items from the Museum's collection. These include such diverse items as a replica of the magnificent Bute mazer (a 14th and 16th century communal drinking vessel), silver jewellery found in the Borders, and a replica of an ornately carved tombstone. (There are also some weapons to be seen - war is not totally forgotten!)

Further proof that the arts flourished in these troubled times is demonstrated in photographs of richly illuminated early manuscripts, the originals of which are held by the National Library of Scotland. There is also a replica of a pre-Reformation stained glass roundel, based on an original in Edinburgh's Magdalen Chapel.

Much of Scottish history, particularly that of the Highlands and Islands, was handed down orally, often by the bard (or sennachie) accompanied on the clarsach, or Scottish harp. Visitors can see at Bannockburn a Queen Mary clarsach, modelled on the best existing instrument, to be seen in the Royal Museum of Scotland. Medieval harps were wire-strung,



"Forty-nine Famous Scots"

Photo: National Trust.

in contrast to the gut-strung instruments in use today, and produce a totally different tone. For those who would like to play and hear one of these, there is also a smaller Tintagel harp: both instruments were specially made for the Bannockburn exhibition by Tim Hobrough of Beaulieu.

In addition to William Wallace, four other lifelike figures are featured in the main displays. These are: Robert Bruce, the victorious king on his throne after his defeat of Edward II; a Lord of the Isles (the Lords were powerful magnates who once controlled most of western Scotland) descending from his boat on to a stretch of west coast strand; a young Mary Queen of Scots playing Royal Tennis at Falkland Palace; and James VI of Scotland and I of England writing at his desk.

As well as interpreting some 300 years of Scottish history, items displayed and exhibition copy cover most of the country. For the benefit of people who would like to visit these places - some of them very far-flung - the Roundel area boasts a large electric map with six circuits, each linked to a push button. Five of these illuminated locations are associated with each of the five lifelike figures, while the sixth concerns the replica and original artefacts. The upper walls of this large round room are illustrated with drawings of 49 famous Scots, selected by Dr Smith and drawn by Jim Proudfoot.



James the First and Sixth at his desk

(Photo: National Trust)

During the passing of the three hundred momentous years covered in the main display, the life of the common man in Scotland varied little. Largely, but exclusively, for the benefit of the many school parties which visit Bannockburn, 'The land of the Scots' display in the Roundel depicts various facets of the period, eg agriculture, trade, communications, etc. Interpretation is by means of limited copy, coloured illustrations based on existing woodcuts, and four scale models.

It will be clear that in a project of this size, a vast amount of research was required. The Trust is fortunate to have an enthusiastic MSC team, who spent long hours poring over tomes to find out what various people looked like, what they wore, etc.

But the team's contribution was not confined to research; various members helped with illustration and models for the Roundel displays, made banners and clothes for the lifelike figures - one even designed and knitted Wallace's chain mail!

'The Kingdom of the Scots' exhibition was formally opened by the Earl of Elgin and Kincardine on 17 June, 1987. Bannockburn Heritage Centre is open daily until 31 October from 10am-6pm. Why not go and see it for yourself? Next year.

## IN THE NEWS

### NITRATE PROJECT 2000 A campaign to preserve part of the British nation's heritage.

Vast collections of old feature films - newsreels, documentaries, and feature films - made before 1952, are rapidly deteriorating and must be copied on to a stable film stock before the year 2000. If this cannot be accomplished we will witness the destruction of moving images which are widely regarded as primary historical source material. Support for the NITRATE PROJECT 2000 campaign will help to avoid a catastrophe which would never be allowed to happen to books or other archival resources.

Until about 1952, all professional films made in Britain used so-called nitrate stock - a kind of base with exceptionally good light-transmitting properties, and which was also cheap to manufacture.

Nitrate stock has two defects. The first, which was well known from the very first days of cinema, is that it is highly flammable. Nitrate film's second defect is that it is chemically unstable. After a period of time the flexible, tough, transparent support turns into a gooey mass, then to a powder. This did not worry early film-makers unduly. They were making films for the Here and Now, not for posterity. Even newsreels were treated as throwaways, rather than as sources of images which might have permanent value.

The 'Nitrate Problem' is simple. All nitrate film is dangerous to store and use, and it is self-destructive. It is not 'at risk' in some abstract sense. Even as these words are being read, nitrate-based images are self-destructing in British film libraries, and private collections. Once these images are lost, they can never be recovered. Although storing material in special vaults under carefully controlled conditions of temperature and humidity can slow the process down, nothing can stop it entirely or reverse it. Some film has lasted for 75 years or more: other film has destroyed itself in less than a generation.

Nothing is safe. Feature films, documentaries, travelogues, newsreels, scientific and educational films - in short the moving image heritage of Britain before 1952.

#### Why Does it Matter?

The question can and should be asked the other way round. What conceivable reason could there be for willing the destruction of the visual record of life in Britain in the first half of the Twentieth Century? Not life as seen only through the eyes of feature film makers (important though that may be), but life as recorded by newsreel cameramen and presented by their editors; industrial film makers, political activists from all parties, and members of the armed forces fighting in all parts of the globe.

Nitrate film cannot be preserved forever, but the images it contains can be transferred to safer, more durable media. The best of these at the present time is so-called 'Acetate' film stock, which is not flammable. Many world archives have nitrate transfer programmes which are doing just this, although few such programmes will be able to preserve more than a fraction of the material they hold before it is too late.

The campaigners believe that all nitrate material in Britain, whether in public or private hands, and irrespective of who owns its copyright, or what its historical 'value' is thought to be at the present time, should be transferred to Acetate stock.

Best estimates are that the total known nitrate film holdings in the UK amount to about 189,786,700 feet (54,536,408 metres), i.e. over 35,000 hours of film.

It is calculated that, at 1986 prices, the total cost of transferring the 35mm nitrate material known to be at risk will be £10,802,300. To this must be added some £3,672,782 for staffing, equipment, and storage costs: a total of some £14,475,082.

This represents an expenditure of approximately £1,113,467 per year for the period from 1988 to the end of the century. The campaigners are urging that the funds for this project should come from public sources. The campaign has two prongs: the first is to secure a commitment from the government to provide the funds necessary for the implementation of this programme, and provide the funds necessary for adequately carrying out the nitrate preservation programmes of the Imperial War Museum and the National Film Archive. The second is to ensure that any future government will continue to support these two projects until their successful completion in the year 2000.

NITRATE PROJECT 2000  
c/o 111 Wardour Street  
LONDON W1V 4AY

### SIGN-MAKING WITH EAS HELP

Two of Gloucestershire's most famous attractions - The Wildfowl Trust at Slimbridge and Westonbirt Arboretum - now feature work by a young businessman who left school at the age of 16. Lee Pearce (26) whose father and grandfather were craftsmen, took a six month Skillcentre course in carpentry and joinery. Then, pursuing his hobby of photography, he joined the Community Programme as a photographic and darkroom assistant at The Wildfowl Trust at Slimbridge.

"I wanted to work professionally as a photographer, but it soon became clear it was a difficult business to break into. However, while I was at Slimbridge I became interested in making the weather-proof signs which are used to tell visitors about the birds on the site. With help from Joe Blossom and Jonathan Leach from the Trust I worked on the Trust's method of combining photography, printing, and my own artwork which I then sandwiched between layers of fibre-glass and hardened with resin."

Lee decided to start up his own sign-making business using a £40 a week Enterprise Allowance Scheme grant, and set up a workshop and darkroom in a former hayloft which is part of his parent's home in Tetbury.

"I'll tackle any job, and since I've worked for The Wildfowl Trust I've learnt a lot about birds, although I must admit it's often difficult to tell the difference between some of the geese," says Lee. "The main thing is to have a good eye for accuracy and plenty of patience. I try to be a perfectionist, and it pays off in the end because people are very satisfied with my work."

Lee works through the entire process of producing the long-lasting signs, starting

with researching the subject, whether it is the lesser white-fronted goose, or an antique chest of drawers. He draws the art work, photographs it onto a clear lithographic film, painting in the colours with designer's gouache, and then sets the sheet into the resin and fibre-glass using moulds which he put together using his carpentry skills.

"I'm always on the lookout for new clients, and would like to work for the National Trust and English Heritage, but I enjoy turning out plaques for individuals as well, which they can use as advertising signs," he says.

"Although my business is doing well, I'm glad I joined EAS, especially as the money is always there to take care of the bills. I think the scheme is a good idea because there must be lots of people who wouldn't set up a business unless they had some kind of back-up."

Lee Pearce can be contacted at Library Lodge, New Church Street, Tetbury. His telephone number is Tetbury (0666) 52163.

### MUSEUM OF THE YEAR AWARDS FOR SCOTLAND 1987

The Secretary of State for Scotland presented six prizes in Edinburgh on behalf of National Heritage who make the awards annually to museums which have made outstanding developments within the last year.

The first prize went to Anthropological Museum, Marischal College, Aberdeen, for quality of interpretation and presentation in the new anthropological exhibition. The second prize was shared between Bo'ness and Kinneil Railway, owned by the Scottish Railway Preservation Society, and the Scottish Mining Museum at Newtongrange, Midlothian. Special commendations were awarded to Kelso Museum for its local history exhibition and to the Robert Burns Centre, Dumfries for its display using audio visuals.

For the first time, a prize was awarded this year for an outstanding temporary exhibition, 'Mr Wood's Fossils' which was designed and produced by the Hunterian Museum, University of Glasgow. The exhibition is currently being toured to museums throughout Scotland by the Scottish Museums Council.

### HONOUR FOR IRONBRIDGE GORGE

The Ironbridge Gorge Museum grabbed the headlines again earlier this year when it was designated as a World Heritage Site by UNESCO - an accolade which gives it enormous prestige as a cultural feature and will do nothing to harm its visitor attendance figures.

In March HRH the Prince of Wales inaugurated the wrought-iron works on the Blists Hill site - the only place in the western world where wrought-iron is produced. And in May, the Victorian bank began to operate, making Ironbridge the only museum in the U.K. to trade in its own currency.

### ADMISSION CHARGES TO MUSEUMS

The Museums Association in a recent statement on admission charges, underlined the responsibility of central and local government to maintain the tradition

of free access to museums and galleries. "Museums and galleries form part of Britain's internationally renowned cultural heritage," says the statement. "The tradition of free access to the collections of our publicly funded museums and galleries is as important and integral a component of the Nation's academic, educational and cultural life as are free library and education services. Neither local nor central government should apply pressure on museums and galleries to introduce admission charges to meet their most basic running costs," the policy statement added.

The new policy is being widely distributed to museums. Under it, the decision whether or not to charge for admission would be taken by the individual museum, taking into account its location, the appeal of its collections, the likely impact on its public and its financial situation. The policy also sets out the principles which should be applied when admission is charged. These include free admission for the equivalent of at least one day a week, and reduced rates for certain types of visitors.

Launching the new policy, Ian Robertson, President of the Association said, "We are delighted that the Museums and Galleries Commission (the Government's advisory body on museums) has agreed to adopt the Association's statement as its own policy on this important issue. I am sure the new statement of policy will be widely welcomed as providing clear, authoritative guidance in an area of real public concern."

## CITY OF DISCOVERY

Under the dynamic leadership of Jonathan Bryant (ex-Chatterley Whitfield) the Dundee Heritage Trust is trying to emulate the success of cities like Bradford and Wigan by using a rich industrial heritage to bring in tourism and raise the profile of the place. The Trust was formed in 1985 to preserve and present the exceptional industrial heritage of Dundee and its Tayside communities. It is responsible for Royal Research Ship Discovery.

"This Heritage", said Trust Chairman, Mr William Low, "is a timeless story of character and spirit - human qualities which contribute to our continuing process and development. This enduring quality we choose to call the Spirit of Dundee".

Restoring Discovery, built in Dundee in 1901 and opening her to the public are the Trust's first projects. In the planning stages are the Heritage Centre and the Textile project.

The Trust receives support from the City of Dundee District Council, Tayside Regional Council and the Dundee Project. As an independent organisation it earns income from visitors to Discovery and these contributions support the on going maintenance costs of the historic vessel. During the summer, visitors to the Royal Research Ship Discovery had a special opportunity to meet history face to face. Characters from the stories of Discovery and Dundee were presented in role and in full costume.

Scripted by the renowned Scottish Playwright Billy Kay, the eight characters included a Dundee Shipwright, Discovery's cook, Captain Scott, Shackleton, Dr Wilson and members of the crew. A professional team of actors from the Scottish Youth Theatre and under the

directorship of John Mathews, portrayed the characters and interacted with the public.

"We are all fascinated by people", said John Mathews, "even more so by people from the past. The Dundee Heritage Trust Historic Role Play Programme is a major new initiative in interpretation in Scotland and one which will have tremendous benefits in both education and tourism". Mr Graham McKee, Head of the Dundee Project said: "This innovative presentation of aspects of the life of Discovery will create widespread interest, attract more visitors to the ship and to Dundee and help the national promotion of Dundee as the City of Discovery".

## BEAMISH - CHAMPIONS OF EUROPE

BEAMISH, Britain's 1986 Museum of the Year was awarded the prestigious 1987 European Museum of the Year Award at a ceremony in Durham City on Tuesday 30th June 1987.

Over 70 Museums, (from Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, Great Britain, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Sweden and Switzerland) competed for the grand title - "European Museum of the Year 1987" - under the auspices of the Council of Europe.

The International panel of judges were united in their choice of Beamish as European Museum of the Year. Commenting on their choice in the commemorative brochure for the 1987 award, Kenneth Hudson, Director of the European Museum of the Year Award, said, "To have created, on a greenfield site and in such a short time, a very large open air museum which encapsulates the industrial heritage and the way of life of one of Britain's toughest and most long suffering regions is no small feat. To have done this in a way which provides entertainment and relaxation, as well as stirring memories is something even more remarkable."

## KIDS AT GOODWOOD

Children visiting Goodwood House, near Chichester, this summer received a special welcome. The 3rd Duke of Richmond, who lived about 200 years ago and who was largely responsible for the Goodwood House we know today, acted as guide in a new activity book produced by the West Sussex Countryside Studies Trust.

The House is one of the facilities made available for educational purposes by the Goodwood Estate for the West Sussex Countryside Studies Trust. The Trust was formed in the 1970's as a joint initiative between Goodwood and the West Sussex County Council. The book, 'The 3rd Duke's Tale' is aimed at 9-13 year olds. It has been written by Elizabeth Newbery, Education Officer to the Trust, with the aim of making Goodwood House interesting to the younger visitor.

It is primarily an activity book, geared to children finding things out for themselves, rather than a guidebook containing lots of facts. Elizabeth Newbery said, "What we have aimed to do is make history come alive. The book is based upon the idea that children will be most interested if they are allowed to discover things for themselves. For example, instead of giving facts about the portrait of the 3rd Duke, children are asked to look for his dog in the painting and to give him a name. Or to look closely



Arts Minister, Richard Luce (right) with Lord March and the author Elizabeth Newbery at the launch of the '3rd Duke's Tale'.

(Photo Portsmouth Publishing).

at the face of Mary 3rd Duchess of Richmond and to decide what kind of person she was'.

The book, designed and illustrated by Susan England, has been sponsored by Christie's International and is on sale at the House, or to school parties through the Secretary, West Sussex Countryside Studies Trust, Goodwood House, near Chichester.

## ENVIRONMENT NOW

You will be aware that "Environment Now" was launched in September with an extensive advertising campaign by its Scottish publishers, Holmes McDougall Ltd of Glasgow. Six issues per year are planned and it aims for a national coverage of environmental issues in a way calculated to appeal to the concerned layman. So editorial content will range from Energy Options to Wildlife Conservation and will embrace the Urban Environment, Transport, Planning, Marine Environment, Countryside Management and many other topics amongst its features articles and regular columns.

The first issue, published on 10th September, had a print run of 100,000 but it will be interesting to know what the circulation settles down to with a cover price of £1.50 per issue.

Editor Roger Smith comes to 'Environment Now' after 9½ years at the helm of the leading walker's magazine 'The Great Outdoors' and says he greatly relishes the challenge offered by the new launch and of making the magazine essential reading for a wide audience.

## ECO-GRAPHIC

A new venture is getting under way in West Glamorgan - a photography and graphics service which offers its services on a nationwide basis. Two factors make ECO-Graphics out of the ordinary, firstly they intend to establish themselves as a workers' co-operative and secondly they specialise in natural history, nature conservation, ecology and general environmental themes.

The team consists of two photographers, an archivist, an educational officer, a graphic artist and a co-ordinator who came together under a Community Project Scheme but who are now launching themselves into the commercial world. They aim to offer:-

- A picture stock library of British flora and fauna.
- Slide packs on specific environmental themes.
- A complete photographic and graphic design service.
- Talks and courses on environmental photography.

They can be reached at Aberdulais Post Office, Aberdulais, West Glamorgan SA10 8EU.

## PUBLICATIONS

**The Local Jigsaw - an information pack on Village Appraisals and Parish Maps published by The Countryside Commission, The Development Commission for Rural England, ACRE and Common Ground, Pack of 15 Cards is £2.25**

As a villager rather than a townsman, I found the message of this information pack on Village Appraisals and Parish Maps almost a moral challenge.

Everything that these twin schemes stand for seems so right, so proper, so necessary.

The 'Village Appraisal' idea is a rather more democratic and subjective local replay of the Norman Domesday Survey. In this twentieth century version the opinions and needs, the likes and dislikes of local people (which William the Bastard was not over-concerned with) are sought and recorded alongside the practical features and resources of the locality (which interested William rather more).

Just how to set about such a survey or 'appraisal' of your own village is persuasively described in the first six of the fifteen double-sided A5 cards in this information pack. The practical and beneficial applications of such an appraisal - such as resisting inappropriate development, or stimulating community activities, or rationalising resources and facilities - are dangled before our eyes as carrots to get us moving.

The Parish Map scheme takes up six more cards, and again is so well expounded that it comes as a socially moral exercise that is bound to do any village community good.

The idea is that as many residents as possible should together record their appreciation of the place in which they live in some artistic form, probably (though not inevitably) as a map or series of maps that others may see and enjoy - and think about. A sort of corporate expression of a community's vision of its environment.

A number of successful projects in each of these categories (Village Appraisals and Parish Maps) are described and illustrated. Four residents of Hindon, Wiltshire, "walked the village one Sunday in June 1985, systematically photographing all the houses. In many cases the occupants came to the doorstep to be included. Later 460 black and white prints were displayed at the village hall and local pub."

A poem written about a derelict stone Dame School at Raisbeck, Cumbria, led to such interest in the building that it was later saved from demolition, and restored. Women of Redlynch in Wiltshire have created a relief map of their parish in quilting and embroidery.

One of the pleasant things about the scheme is that they are infinitely flexible and adaptable; each community is encouraged to do its own thing. As it happens, in the only instance that I have encountered of parish maps, a District Council has paternally been doing several villages' things for them, and has inevitably in the process by-passed the community involvement that is essentially

inherent in the idea. The resulting maps, though much better than no maps at all, and possibly all that could be done under the circumstances, are no more imaginative or inspirational than a routine report to a sub-committee. Which goes to show that the spirit of the exercise is just as important as its efficiency.

To what extent are these ideas, and the pack of modestly titled 'information cards' that enshrine them, relevant to 'interpretation'? The answer must be 'totally relevant'. In as much as they are concerned with encouraging people to look with fresh eyes at their own surroundings, these schemes are potentially right at the centre of what environmental interpretation is all about. Of course, it would be possible for an 'appraisal' to be so pre-occupied with a local community's need for drains or a bus service that the sense of place and of history gets missed - but that would be in despite of the well-balanced exhortations of the author of the 'Village Appraisal' cards.

Similarly, it would be possible for a parish map to be a rather sterile plotting of officially categorised sites on a formal planning department's dye-line; but that would be entirely contrary to the spirit of the excellent advice given in the Parish Map section.

No - to undertake either an Appraisal or a Map along the lines so well presented in this publication could not fail to open people's eyes to the significance of their own environment in time and space, history and geography.

The joy of the authors' approach (though whether or not this thought brings joy to those of us who operate in rather formalised fields of interpretation would be an interesting enquiry) is its immediacy and humanity; it is creating a kind of 'disposable interpretation' in that the process can be more important than the end product. So much so that one of the participating parishes, Lockwood in East Cleveland, has said (through the mouth of one of its residents) "It's the hope of our steering committee that this Parish Map project will be on-going, without any end in view. There's always something that can be done." Bully for Lockwood. If this spirit spreads, professional interpreters could be out of business.

Meanwhile, let us professionals take on board the philosophy on these schemes, and see whether we can incorporate some of the bright ideas that village communities are coming up with, into our own work.

Andrew Piersenne.

**The Heritage Industry. Britain in a climate of decline. Robert Hewison with drawings by Chris Orr and photographs by Allan Titmuss. Methuen 1987 £6.95. Paperback.**

"Heritage, for all its seductive delights, is bogus History".

The alarming vision lurking behind this book is of Britain slowly evolving into one

giant open air museum. A nightmare fuelled by the frightening statistic that one new museum opens every week in Britain. Hewison's book aims to warn us of the dangers of this trend. He claims that "The Heritage Industry" has taken over the past, manipulating it for economic gain and cashing in on Britain's nostalgia for the "Good Old Days", all with the result that present-day cultural development is stunted.

"The question then is not whether or not we should preserve the past, but what kind of past we have chosen to preserve, and what that has done to our present."

Hewison attacks the "Heritage Industry" from every angle. Its authenticity is questioned. Wigan Pier is a special target here, attacked both for glamourising the past and for exploiting its name as a marketing asset with little actual benefit to the community.

Compared to Wigan, Beamish escapes relatively lightly, although not unscathed. Hewison highlights the way in which Beamish has flourished at the very time that nearby Consett was devastated by the closure of its steelworks. This illustrates one of the main themes of the book, how the industrial decline of Britain has increasingly meant that the Heritage option has been taken as a way out, creating a few jobs here and there, but not facing up to fundamental problems.

"When Museums become one of Britain's new growth industries, they are not signs of vitality, but symbols of national decline."

Apart from this theme, Hewison devotes considerable space and energy to attacking the National Trust. This he does very successfully, although to little constructive purpose. He also plunges into the controversy over political subsidies and business sponsorship for the Arts.



Copyright, C. Orr.

"One of the most successful publications of recent years has been 'The Country Diary of an Edwardian Lady', a title which manages to roll all the pastoralism, snobbery and retromania into one ball."

Hewison has made many important criticisms of our use of the past. These criticisms need to be answered, but however valid, they tend to be negative, not constructive. That aside, I would recommend this well written book as a lively and stimulating read; it's almost worth buying for the illustrations alone! Kim Lanning.

## BOOKS

**The Tudors of Hampton Court Palace - A Pack for Teachers - Department of the Environment - 1987**

Hampton Court is a large and complex building in which school visit groups are likely to come to grief unless very careful pre-planning has been undertaken by teachers. This excellent pack should be compulsory teaching for all party leaders and deserves wider distribution amongst the general visitor.

The 36 page A4 Teachers Handbook is clearly presented and attractively designed. Sections dealing with preparation for a visit and organisation on site could apply to out-of-school visits elsewhere and while obvious to many, amply repays repetition here. A large part of the Handbook is devoted to follow-up work involving such diverse activities as making a Tudor Lady's head-dress, a surprise pie and a herb garden.

Eleven A3 Information Sheets supply useful facts for children to use, topics covered include architecture, Henry VIII, building the palace and details about specific rooms in the building. Six A3 Worksheets each provide a plan of one section of the palace with an average of 12 questions and points of interest to investigate.

All the material is clearly presented in black and white and may be amended and reproduced without permission for educational use. Aimed at the 10-14 year age group it could be adapted

for use with other age ranges.

A minor error on Information Sheet 1 does not detract from the value of the publication. Highly recommended, whether you intend visiting Hampton Court with a school group or not!

*Alan Staniforth*

### Caring for the Visitor

Interpretation is one of the story telling arts. It aims to tell people about the significance in an interesting and enjoyable way.

This book by Michael Quinion Associates, was commissioned to add an extra dimension to the Civic Trust's Calderdale Project. The decline of the textile industry, which traditionally has been a mainstay of the Calderdale economy, has devalued the area in people's minds. 'Caring for the Visitor' rediscovers and reappraises the special assets which Calderdale continues to possess and suggests ways of helping both local inhabitants and visitors to appreciate the true worth of the district. 'Caring for the Visitor' is not narrowly parochial. The techniques suggested are appropriate to other areas. The methodology and conclusions will be of interest to all developers of heritage-based facilities, especially in areas seeking economic regeneration.

*Published by the Civic Trust, the book has 56, fully illustrated pages and sells at £6.00 (£6.50 post paid).*

## CHAIRMAN'S COMMENTS

We have just had a successful conference in Belfast coupled with the fourth presentation of the Carnegie Interpret Britain Awards, this time by His Grace, the Duke of Abercorn. Some 70 of us attended the 4-day event based at the plush Dunadry Hotel close to Aldergrove Airport in beautiful countryside away from the centre of Belfast. The conference looked at the role of visitor centres in interpretation and visited the award-winning Bushmills Distillery and Giants Causeway Centre. We contrasted these with the development of open-air museums and had an enjoyable visit to the Ulster Folk Museum. We also considered the issues of interpretation of conflict, war and religion and heard a provocative paper by David Uzzell which raised the issue of how these issues should be presented to visitors. It was all the more thought-provoking in the wake of the dreadful carnage of Enniskillen at the war memorial on the last day of our stay in Northern Ireland.

To turn to a happier subject, the Awards presentation was the last to be sponsored by the Carnegie United Kingdom Trust. After 4 years and 300 entries they have ceased their sponsorship of the Awards but, as you already know, not of the Society following their grant towards the appointment of a Development Officer. At their November Trustees Meeting they also generously agreed to underwrite the Second World Congress which is a great assistance to the Organising Committee. The Conference, to be held at the University of Warwick between 30 August - 4 September 1988, is well advanced in its organisation: we have had over 130 offers of papers to date and have recently requested abstracts. We are anxious that we attract as many UK interpreters as possible and hope you will start saving for what is going to be a very prestigious event.

To return to the Awards, your Committee

has decided to continue the scheme and are in the process of printing the entry forms. We intend to market rather wider than in the past, hoping particularly to attract cathedrals, historic houses, National Trust properties and community-based schemes. In relation to the latter we have been fortunate to obtain a grant from UK 2000 in order to encourage interpretive work undertaken by MSC schemes. We are also chasing a commercial sponsor for the Award scheme and hope to bring you good news in the next edition.

We are very aware of the need to reach the membership and provide what you want: in order to assist the Events Officer and Editor and to stimulate an increase in membership we are devising a regional structure of contact people who can act as a gathering point for news and possible meetings, workshops, visits, seminars etc. We have targeted members around the country who have already expressed a wish to help and I hope that the framework will be operational early in 1988. The appointment of the proposed Development Officer will provide a focal point for Society activity not only to gather information but also to disseminate. An office adjacent to CEI is sitting waiting for us and we are hopeful that a grant from the Countryside Commission will soon be forthcoming to enable us to make an appointment.

You will, I am sure, be interested to know that our great friend, Geoffrey Lord, has agreed to be the President of CEI. We are strengthening our links with them and the appointment of Geoffrey is an important step in bringing about mutual co-operation and development. We will be represented at the opening of their new offices in Manchester Polytechnic on 7th December and look forward to a flourishing partnership in the coming years.

*IAN C. A. PARKIN  
Chairman*

## DIARY DATES

DEC 8-10. IMAGES 87. Europe's premier multi-image audio-visual event. Eastbourne. Details 01 - 580 - 0962

JAN 7. PUBLIC PERCEPTION OF THE COUNTRYSIDE. Centre for Agricultural Strategy Conference. London. Details (0734) 661518

JAN 12 & 26. SALES & PROMOTIONS TECHNIQUES. North West Branch ILAM. Details - Pat Ravenscroft (061) 834 9362.

FEB 24-26 INTERPRETING & PRESENTING SITES TO THE VISITOR. CEI Training Seminar. Lanark. Details (061) 228 6171.

MAR 8. AMERICAN TECHNIQUES OF LIVING HISTORY. SIBH Seminar with guest speakers from Colonial Williamsburg, etc. London. Details Malcolm Mc Bratney (01-734) 6010 Ex. 815

MAR 23-25. CEI Training Seminar in Newby Bridge, Cumbria (see Feb 24-26).

MAR 27. TIMBER FRAMED BUILDINGS. Day school organised by Chiltern Open Air Museum. Details (0923) 772755.

APRIL 13-15. WATERSITE 2000. Congress on the rejuvenation of docklands for leisure BRISTOL.

APRIL 20-22. CEI Training Seminar in Lyndhurst, New Forest (See Feb 24-26).

APRIL 25-28. AUDIO-VISUAL 88 at Wembley Exhibition Centre. Details (01-688) 7788.

MAY 6-8 SIBH SPRING CONFERENCE NATIONAL PARKS THEME. Details Tim Laker (0703) 455156

AUG 30-SEP 4. SECOND WORLD CONGRESS Heritage Presentation & Interpretation. University of Warwick.

## A Dying Art?



*(Photo: D. Uzzell)*

- Marilyn Tolhurst writes to point out that she was the writer of the English Heritage Handbook for Teachers on OSBORNE HOUSE, revised in Issue No. 35 of the Journal. She can be contacted at The House, Boosey's Walk, New Buckenham, NORFOLK NR16 2AE.

- Alice Bondi, who wrote a piece for Issue No 36, says I got the name of her employing organisation wrong. It is EAST CUMBRIA COUNTRYSIDE PROJECT and I am happy to set the record straight.

## THE CARNEGIE INTERPRET BRITAIN AWARDS. 1987

His Grace, the Duke of Abercorn presented the 1987 Carnegie Interpret Britain Awards at a special ceremony in the Harbour Office, Belfast on, Thursday 5th November, 1987.

Awards were presented for four projects and special commendations for a further five.

This important national Award scheme is organised by the Society for the Interpretation of Britain's Heritage, with financial backing from the Carnegie UK Trust. The scheme has been operating since 1984, and its aim is to recognise outstanding examples of interpretation, designed to help visitors enjoy and appreciate Britain's rich and varied heritage.

Any public, private or voluntary organisation can enter provided that they have a scheme for the general visitor. Such schemes can include Visitor Centres, publications, audio visual programmes, living history and events programmes.

Some 55 entries were received this year from all four corners of the country. They included events programmes in East Anglia, family activity books from the south coast, a car trail in Scotland, a visitor centre in Manchester, an information centre in Northern Ireland and a farm trail in Wales.

The entries are first assessed by regional judges who submit their nominations to a national panel of experts who then make the final selection.



*Fairholmes Visitor Centre*

*(Photo: John Hemming)*

The following received Awards:

**1. Trackback: A family discovery pack. Weald & Downland Museum Singleton, Chichester, West Sussex.**

A Pack that actively involves the whole family on site and provides them with further practical tasks once they get home. Two trails on man's use of timber - today and in the past.

**2. CARE Project Countryside Playscheme, Barnsley.**

A scheme designed to involve young people in a wide range of countryside projects. The scheme spans work in school, the local community and doorstep environment and the wider countryside.

**3. Giant's Causeway Centre, Co. Antrim**

A major Visitor Centre catering for over 200,000 visitors illustrating the history, beauty and legend of the Causeway coast area using panels, models, VDU's and AV.

**4. Explore Surrey's Countryside**

A programme of guided walks, self guided trails and a mobile information Centre to stimulate the greater use and understanding of the countryside by local people. Organised by Surrey County Council.



*Giant's Causeway Centre*

*(Photo: Northern Ireland Tourist Board)*

The following received commendations:

**1. North Devon Coast Thematic Trails**

A series of detailed trail publications for the seriously interested non-specialist covering the Taw Torridge Estuary. The objective is to encourage an increased awareness and empathy for the environment. Produced by Thematic Trails, Oxford.

**2. Ancient High House, Stafford** Stafford Borough Council tell the story of Stafford and the house through heritage exhibits including archaeological finds. This is part of the town's tourism initiative.

**3. Fairholmes Visitor Centre, Derwent, Derbyshire.**

A joint venture between Severn Trent Water Authority and the Peak Park Joint Planning Board has produced a purpose-built visitor centre. The

displays aim to stimulate the visitor to enjoy the scenery, history and wilderness outside - the objective is essentially orientation.

**4. Robert Burns Centre, Dumfries.**

The conversion of a 1781 water mill as an interpretive centre on the theme of Robert Burns and Dumfries. This includes an AV, exhibition, models and figures. It is part of the Scottish Tourist Board's Burns Heritage Trail.

**5. Events Programme, Lagan Valley Regional Park, Belvoir Park Forest, Belfast.**

An extensive events programme aiming to enhance visitor enjoyment and create and nurture an appreciative attitude to the Park. A number of key and satellite events with an emphasis on activity and catering for family and youth interests.

## 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 £12.00, Library £7.00, Corporate £30.00, Student £6.00, Overseas £12.00 (£16 airmail).  
The views expressed in articles and reports are not necessarily those of the Society for the Interpretation of Britain's Heritage.



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