

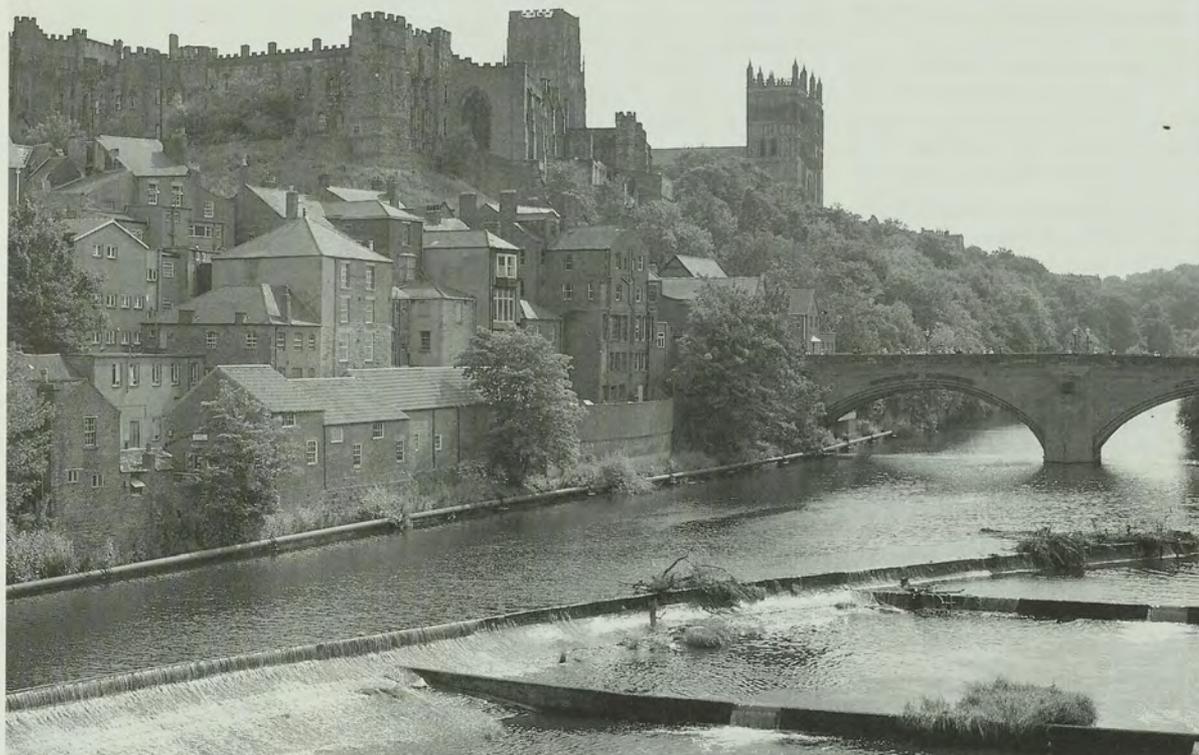
Winter 1989

HERITAGE

THE SOCIETY FOR THE
INTERPRETATION OF
BRITAIN'S HERITAGE

INTERPRETATION

Nº 43



Our theme for this issue is the interpretation of churches and cathedrals

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DO THEY STILL HAVE SERVICES HERE?

Challenges for would-be church interpreters

MOYA FEEHALLY

Church Interpretation Consultant

They call it "the numinous" - that special atmosphere which many people sense in churches - a mixture of awe and attraction which is found in places where man reaches to communion with God. It is a quality of buildings which have been steeped in prayer for centuries, and enabling visitors to experience it is an essential part of interpreting a church. A church building presents interpreters with some different challenges to those they have to meet in other historic buildings.

The heritage industry is growing apace in Britain, yet our old churches have, on the whole, been left on one side. In heritage interpretation terms there is so much potential - centuries of history, wonderful architecture and craftsmanship, memorials to national and local events and personalities, curios and curiosities, music, art and wildlife refuges in churchyards. The buildings have always been at the heart of our communities and (with some exceptions) are basically unaltered and still used for the purpose for which they were built - not many other ancient buildings can claim that!

There is potential too in visitor numbers. The English Tourist Board estimate that 10 million people visit English parish churches every year and 20 million visit the cathedrals and greater churches. Of the 54 historic buildings which attracted at least 200,000 visitors in 1988, more than half were cathedrals and churches. About 7,500 churches are open regularly, and as some 200 of them receive well over 10,000 visitors and 13 receive over 100,000 visitors, many must be virtually undiscovered. At some of the large and popular sites the church authorities have responded to the visitors and developed interpretive programmes and other facilities, but many smaller churches offer little more than a guide book, if that.

Why is this enormous potential in churches and cathedrals largely unrealised? There are several reasons, and a would-be interpreter needs to understand them if he is to develop successful interpretation.

Perhaps the main reason is that churches are different - they do not fit easily into any category of building or site which we are used to dealing with. They are not

museums or galleries or stately homes. They are working buildings, but not in the same way as factories or milking parlours are working buildings. Their primary function is as places where people meet together to worship God, they are consecrated, and concerned with things holy and spiritual. They are about life and death. Each part of a church building symbolises or illustrates some aspect of Christian belief or has been designed for a particular role in the pattern of worship - for example, the font, the altar rail or the stained glass windows. These can only be really interpreted within that context, and the interpretation techniques which are used should not detract in any way from the atmosphere and function of the church. You do not have to believe to appreciate a church, but you do need to understand why it is as it is.

The potential will not be realised, either, all the time we take churches for granted - we are so used to them being there and often have little concept of the importance of their role within the local or national heritage, or of the treasures they contain. Local congregations tend to be conservative and cling to traditional practices. They perceive their church as the place where they go to worship or for weddings and funerals, but not as tourist attractions. In many places any idea of opening the church regularly for visitors or providing some form of interpretation other than a traditional guide book would be resisted unless, say, a neighbouring church had started a successful scheme. This is not necessarily as inward

looking as it may seem. Many congregations find themselves caring for an old church which is far too large for the needs of a dwindling population and far too expensive to maintain with available resources. Generously as they may give in money and in time, they are hard pressed to pay the diocesan quota let alone maintain and repair a building ravaged by damp, pollution and general deterioration due to old age. The resources needed to keep a church open and provide a welcome to visitors may simply be unavailable.

Resources - at least people's time - are certainly needed to overcome the security problem in many churches. Increasingly insurers will not provide cover if the building is left open and unattended. It's not only the possibility of theft, but also of vandalism, arson and sickening desecration. Small congregations who sense they hold their church in trust from the past for the future, cannot afford the repairs which would be needed and may feel it is wrong to give vandals opportunity

to do their worst, so the buildings are locked when not in use. With society as it is today no stately home or museum owner, let alone a householder, would leave his building open and unattended, but many feel it should be different for churches and there is a strong lobby to keep them open. One way round the problem is to open the church regularly at pre-advertised times, and have a rota of stewards (never less than two at a time) to welcome visitors. This solution also provides the possibility of effective interpretation as, with some training, members of the congregation and local community can speak with visitors about their church.

If the innate conservatism of many congregations is a challenge so are the misconceptions of many visitors. "Do they still have services here?" is regularly asked in even the most lively cathedrals and many visitors are both dismayed and surprised to find they cannot tour round a church or cathedral because a service is taking place. A lack of understanding of the function of a church building is just part of the general lack of knowledge of Christianity. If you are interpreting a church for all visitors (not just those with special interest) you cannot assume that people know what a font is used for, or what happens at Holy Communion, or even why there is a cross in the church.

There is now a small but growing interest in opening churches so that people can enjoy the rich heritage they contain.

Several regional conferences have been organised and promotional literature produced by groups of churches, by district councils, by tourist boards and by county historic churches trusts. So often, though, it stops there and churches fail to go further and provide any interpretation for the visitors who are drawn in. The Pilgrims Association, formed five years ago, has provided a forum for the exchange of ideas through its annual conference which is particularly helpful to cathedrals and the greater churches. In 1984 SIBH with the Pilgrims Association published a handbook to help churches provide simple interpretation: *Helping The Stones To Speak* sold well and is still the only booklet available in the field. A new and extensively revised edition is now available - details below. Lord Sandford has done much to guide the development of these projects, and also persuaded the Ecclesiastical Insurance Group to make two substantial grants as part of their centenary celebrations, to projects planned to develop new ideas in church tourism. These are now underway in Scotland and in Lincoln Diocese and it is hoped they will give impetus to other schemes.

Such regional projects will help, but in the end churches will only be opened to visitors if the clergy and people want them to be. In this respect each congregation is autonomous. The individuality of a church is one of its greatest assets, no two churches are the same for they are part of different communities and will be

interpreted most effectively by people who come from the community. Realistic and sensitive help, training and advice is now available to them from people who have experience of interpretation within a church setting.

Many may sigh with relief that the heritage industry in its most strident form has passed churches by, for much of the paraphernalia would be inappropriate. However public interest in heritage is aroused, and people want to visit churches. The challenge for interpreters is to help the churches develop a unique product which will welcome, inform and enthuse "all sorts and conditions of men" and still allow space for those who wish to experience the mystical.

Moya Feehally offers an advisory service to churches planning to welcome visitors. She may be contacted at 32 South Street, Durham City, DH1 4QP. Telephone 091 384 3664.

HELPING THE STONES TO SPEAK Welcoming visitors to your church - a practical handbook

Author: Moya Feehally. Design and illustrations: Patricia Riley.

New and extensively revised edition now obtainable from: Tortoiseshell Publications, 32 South Street, Durham City DH1 4QP. Cost: £2.95 per copy 3 or more copies £2.55 each, 10 or more copies £2.10 each.

BRASSES IN BRITAIN
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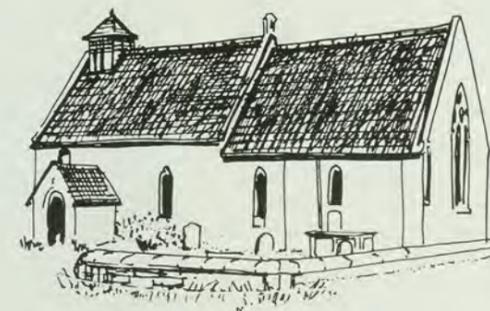
IT FORMS PART OF THE DESIGN OF THE BRASS MADE IN 1364



12
THERE ARE GOOD
14TH CENTURY
SCREENS WITH
FINE CARVING
IN THE CHANCEL

THIS IS A DOOR
OPENING IN THE
SOUTH SCREEN
NEAREST TO THE
HIGH ALTAR. IT
IS WORK OF THE
FIFTEENTH
CENTURY

COLIN SHEWRING 1979



Drawings by Patricia Riley

WELCOMING VISITORS TO LICHFIELD CATHEDRAL

SANDY MARCHANT

The Lichfield Cathedral Visitors' Study Centre (VSC) was opened earlier this year by the Queen Mother. The title is a bit of a mouthful but describes accurately its function—to offer to visitors the opportunity to find out more about the cathedral. It does not pretend to be a Heritage Centre, Lichfield already has one of these and great efforts are being made to integrate visitor experiences within the city. The VSC is run by a charitable trust, the Lichfield Cathedral Education Trust with representatives from the District Council, the Education Department of the County Council and, of course, the Cathedral Chapter. Its daily running is the responsibility of a Director, Canon Tony Barnard who is also the Cathedral Chancellor. This structure, together with a name embracing both education and tourism has been quite an asset when making those approaches to the various sources of funding a non-profit making organisation must make when entering pastures new.

Two adjoining buildings in the Cathedral Close accommodate the VSC - the old Diocesan Registry Office and its accompanying Muniment Room. Believed to have been built at the end of the seventeenth century as stables for Bishop Hackett, the Bishop responsible for the restoration of the cathedral mutilated in the Civil War, the Muniment Room had fallen into disrepair. Two years ago the Dean and Chapter embarked on an imaginative restoration programme which culminated in the visit by the Queen Mother.

The buildings are situated at the southern entrance to the Close on the site of the south western gatehouse of the old fortified Close. Today they stand by the main pedestrian entrance into the Close from the city centre. It is hoped that visitors will call in on their way from the city car parks to the cathedral. In this way the VSC will act as a sort of half-way house between the sometimes stressful act of getting to the town and experiencing the more rarified, and for many unfamiliar and awesome, church building. This entrance is not the way that many visitors would choose to approach the cathedral (for many The West Front IS the Cathedral) but as parking arrangements within the Close have become increasingly complex and difficult, the local authority signing has encouraged entrance from the south rather than from the only other entrance to the Close in the west.

The building is full of character and consists of two floors, the main downstairs room serves as a welcome centre for all

visitors. It is a place to go for welcome, information and refreshment. Upstairs is a large auditorium which acts as a meeting and teaching room for school parties and other booked parties. Leading off is a smaller room which is being equipped as a resources and exhibition room.

These then are the buildings; how are they used to give interested visitors the information they may seek?

In considering this question it is necessary to look deeply both at the resource itself and at the people who visit it. How best can their different and sometimes conflicting needs be met?

OUR RESOURCE is a cathedral; an old and very beautiful building which is also a much loved and well used church, it stands in a similarly beautiful and secluded close. It is not a museum. There are times when nothing seems to be happening yet the daily services continue following a tradition of over 1300 years; the choir boys rehearse, the organist practises, the cleaners vacuum and the vergers rearrange the furniture. At times children use the building for plays, for music and drama: concerts take place as do major festivals, religious and secular. Into all this come: THE VISITORS, 250,000 are expected to visit the cathedral this year. Opening hours



The Queen Mother receives a Lichfield leaflet from Les Ashton, the volunteer artist who helped to produce it.

are long, interspersed with services and events and there is no admission charge. It is natural in this church to want to welcome its visitors and to share with them some of the many things that have happened over the centuries and make the building special. It was the observation that the average visitor spends about fifteen minutes in the building that provided that impetus for the development of visitor services in Lichfield Cathedral. What to share and how to do it are enormous questions especially when considering the needs of the visitor. In an increasingly secular society it is no longer possible to assume any knowledge or understanding of a church at all. I was recently involved with a group of over 30 school children following a GCSE R.E. course and they were looking at Christianity. It became very obvious from talking to them that certain fundamental questions had to be answered before we could go further with the session. It transpired that only two members of the group had ever attended a church service of any sort. For them discussions on the nature of symbolism as found in services, in the furnishings, on the walls and in the building itself were as incomprehensible as the hieroglyphics in an Egyptian tomb.

What is the message we want to get across to our visitors?

First of all that the cathedral is for them, perhaps as a place to study but more as a place to reflect, to be still and to wonder. Secondly, that it is a place full of interest, its building, contents, history and future. Thirdly that this interest is accessible.

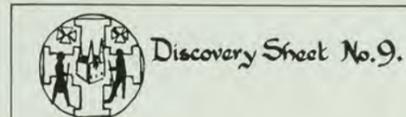
How? - well the first step for us was the recognition that many visitors came in parties, particularly school children. Some years ago special arrangements began to be made for school parties. Guides were trained to show the children around, an audio-visual tape-slide presentation was made depicting 'A Day in the Life of Lichfield Cathedral'. Project sheets were developed and special teachers' material made available. This work continues and the upstairs room of the VSC is increasingly full of children who use the room as a base for their varied activities. Much of the development work now centres around meeting the needs of the teachers especially in relation to the National Curriculum and the GCSE. Primary source material including photographs and oral history tapes are being collated and collected in the Resources Room where they will be readily available for research, loan and in some cases purchase.

Through experience, key themes have been identified which develop some of the special features of Lichfield eg Pilgrimage and St. Chad, Mediaeval Craftsmanship, Glass, Stone and Tiles in the Cathedral, The Civil War and, of course, the history of the Cathedral itself as traced through changes to the building. Each of these topics can be followed through resources that are graphically illustrated on the walls of the teaching room and accompanied by notes that take the user back into the cathedral and through the resources room into the world at large.

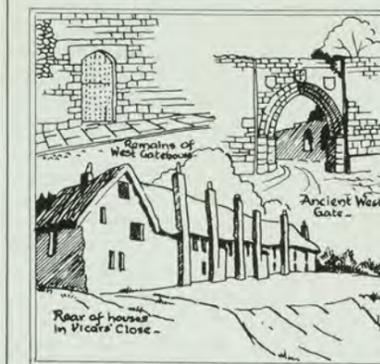
Much of the development work is therefore aimed at those who visit the cathedral in a formal learning capacity. But it is not intended that it should be restricted to them. Many adults visit in groups, as they are increasingly taking part in adult education. Since it takes place in their leisure time, such learning is voluntary and should be fun but is often taken extremely seriously. Much of the material available for schools is also shared with these groups. They watch the A/V and our guides take them around the cathedral according to their areas of special interest. Guides and welcomers are all volunteers, people who love the cathedral. Many are members of the congregation but that is not a pre-requisite. They are trained, some are more suitable than others, and attempts are made to use their talents appropriately. In an organisation involving over three hundred volunteers, most find a suitable outlet. The local Tourist Information Office is working with the Heart of England Tourist Board in developing a programme of guide training. It is likely that we shall not only feed into the course but encourage our guides to participate.

Casual visitors have not been forgotten and ways are being developed to ensure that they are aware of the material available. In the future we hope to run regular guided tours for all, starting from the VSC. The VSC has been equipped with displays aimed to inform the visitor of the things that are special to Lichfield and should not be missed during a visit. Perhaps more ambitiously an attempt has been made to answer the question "What is a cathedral?" and to explain who works there and what they do.

Recognising that many people find a guide book a useful souvenir but rather difficult to cope with while actually undertaking the visit, a new form of guide has been developed. Under the all-embracing title of "Get to Know" various topics have been put under the microscope and mini guides in the form of self guide companion leaflets produced. The proposed list is long, to date five are available. The Mediaeval Close, The Stained Glass, Statues and Monuments, The People of the Close and The Buildings of the Close. Great care is necessary to ensure that the work undertaken forms a part of an integrated whole and to see that nothing detracts from the cathedral experience itself. At every stage the visitor is encouraged to look for evidence in the



GET TO KNOW THE MEDIAEVAL CLOSE OF LICHFIELD CATHEDRAL



An illustrated Plan of the Close
~ ~ in Mediaeval Times ~ ~

cathedral wherever possible.

Not everything is possible and the subject matter of our major topic, Craftsmanship although all around us, at times needs something special really to bring out the detail. As a consequence a major exhibition item, which will also have great interdisciplinary significance for teaching, is being developed thanks to the generosity of a local builder - Linford Bridgmans, and the talents and skills of students of architectural glass at the Clwyd College of Art and Technology in Wrexham. A floor-to-ceiling stone window is to be erected in the teaching room. Into the window, built in Gothic Style complete with tracery, will be fitted two stained glass panels each replicas of panels to be found in the cathedral and chosen for their significance in the Christian story. The whole exhibition will be back-lit thanks to the generosity of Thorn Lighting. Financial support for the project has been promised from the Radcliffe Trust and this will enable the exhibition to extend to include interpretive displays and jigsaws and light boxes for project work. We hope that this exhibition, although designed for school children, will be full of interest to the general public and act as a catalyst for the use of other material.

The whole project has moved remarkably quickly. It is still incomplete but only twelve months ago many of these projects had yet to be put on the drawing board.

Fired by the enthusiasm and commitment of Canon Barnard, the permanent team all of whom are still part-time comprising a secretary, a catering manageress, a general assistant and myself as field officer managed to link together the various parts of the jigsaw to meet the opening deadline. Of course there were many more people involved, many of them volunteers who so readily gave their talents and time. As Field Officer it was my task to link together and to use these talents in a way that would fit into the overall picture. (How grateful I have been for all I have learned from the course in Heritage Management developed by Sue Millar for the University of Birmingham and held at Ironbridge). I shall never cease to be amazed at the hidden resources that are available and often just waiting to be shared. Financially we are very much a non-profit making organisation but in terms of human resources we are rich, and with clear objectives we can provide the visiting public with a service that meets their needs in ways that can hold their own amid the best that the heritage can offer.

CANTERBURY CATHEDRAL AND ITS VISITORS

PETER BRETT

Canon Residentiary

There are a few place-names which universally are immediately recognisable. Canterbury is certainly one of them. From all over the world people come to visit us for many different reasons, which range from curiosity to pilgrimage. Their numbers are large - some 2 million each year. Their demands must be balanced with those of all the other activities of a busy place - the regular round of worship, the special events and all the other things which go on day by day. A few of our visitors plan ahead and book their Guided Tours or Group activities in advance; but most just turn up. About 40% come from abroad - mostly from nearby countries across the Channel. About a fifth of our foreign visitors are from the U.S.A.

The Visits Department has its full time Director who administers the Guides, Chaplains, Welcomers and Cathedral Assistants. Day by day within the building these volunteers, along with the Vesturer's staff of Virgers present our "human face". There are about 280 of them and their enthusiasm and devotion is enormous.

The Director also administers the work of the Education Centre which, under trained teachers, looked after 22,000 young people in 1988 and showed our English and French Audio Visual Presentations to nearly as many others of all ages.

The Education Centre is an expanding organisation. We are now equipped to deal with all levels of requirement up to GCSE and over the past few years have produced a series of publications which are both resources for teachers as well as work books for children.

Undoubtedly our greatest challenge, visitor wise, are the vast numbers who just turn up. Of 2 million, even the 60,000 who pre-book, are only a minute proportion. Our concern is to extend human contact to as many as we can, to facilitate things so as to make a person's visit both enjoyable and worthwhile and, above all, to enable one of the world's most lovely buildings to speak its own beauty and its own meaning.

We spend a lot of time on training people and, as well as that, we pay special attention to such features as signs, notices, leaflets and facilities for the disabled - all the things which smooth the way for large numbers of different kinds of people to receive as much as possible of what a great, working institution, such as a Cathedral, has to offer.

A special feature at Canterbury is its Welcome Centre. This purpose-built place is on the entrance route to the Cathedral door and is staffed mainly by young people

whose brief is to know as much as possible about the Cathedral and the city. Their job is to meet queries and questions of any kind, as well as help with the control of large groups of young people and suchlike ad hoc tasks.

Each year all the Heads of Departments of the Cathedral spend 24 hours away together, getting to grips with a common subject. This year the subject was "Visitor Care". This, I think, is a measure of how seriously we take the matter at Canterbury. Not only the Visits Department but every Department must know how important our contact with visitors is. It is so, not for commercial reasons, nor just so as to be in the top rank of sightseeing places, but first and last we care for our visitors as well as we can because the Cathedral is an instrument of God in His expression of Himself to His world. It is a place of extended and continuing worship. It is the Mother Church, not only of a diocese, but of a world-wide fraternity of Churches - the Anglican Communion. Local, national and international demands are placed upon it, yet the ideal remains, to try to make each and every person who comes feel welcome.

Canterbury Cathedral



Never in their history have such vast numbers been drawn to visit our Cathedrals as they are today. A considerate, courteous and warm welcome is our obligation to our visitors. They have a right too, to expect a reasonable level of efficiency and, indeed, professionalism. Such is the measure of our respect for them and the value we place upon our task.

BLINDED BY NUMBERS: Mediaeval and Modern Tourism in Cathedrals and Greater Churches

Marista Leishman

The Insite Trust

Public interest in Cathedrals & Greater Churches is now a 30 million visitor phenomenon. With figures like these everything in the ecclesiastical tourism garden must be lovely. Enjoyment and satisfaction for the visitors, management capability by the authorities, availability and richness of the resource: all these bright blooms must be combining well in the colour scheme. The statement of visitor totals becomes in itself an argument for *laissez-faire*. Everything is going splendidly, and the perpetual need of the ancient churches for money for maintenance and repairs receives some help from the appeal boxes strategically and frequently placed at every tourist turn. As is rather obvious, however, the great churches of the land were not built all those years ago for tourism and to boost the figures and the satisfaction of the Tourist Boards. Their singleness of purpose was for the exercise of religious observation, and the form of expression through which they chose to make that statement - through architecture, music and the applied arts - were all subordinated to, and supportive, of that single aim. The fact that these assets stimulated specialist interest and led to diversification of interest within the particular disciplines represented - that within time the Christian religion came no longer to be the sole reason for attendance at the building - was in itself a statement both about the intrinsic value of the art forms embodied in the church building and finding their expression there, and about the simple increase in the numbers of the visitors. People came not only as pilgrims to the shrine but as students of music and art. What they found was of such a quality as to encourage more with the scholarly approach.

But tourism was growing too. This pursuit of places simply to be in them, and then to say so, was usually lacking specialism, and despite its distinguished antecedents - amongst the writers, for instance, and poets Johnson, Wordsworth, Shelley, Southey - it lacked demand, provided entertainment and drew numbers. It continues to add to the statistics annually. And simply because they are conspicuous and have their own intrinsic public relations system as a result, the greater churches and cathedrals attract visitors in their thousands.

In their midst are still to be found the pilgrims and the scholars and the students of history and art. But for those thousands for whom the enquiry is undefined and the motivation vague there is the pressing need to recognise that the origin of the visit may

be in the unacknowledged search for more substantial experience and the pivotal occasion around which more of the personal life may revolve as a result.

In order for an experience that is important to emerge from a motivation that is vague, the people on the spot are key. However massive and ancient the building, however filled with history and the expression of religion through art, however significant the setting at the heart of the rural or urban community, the building, which was fashioned all those years ago by people, skills and crafts - must still depend on its own people in the midst: its staff to welcome, inform, interpret, supervise and protect. The greater the place the greater the need for it to become personalised. The experience of the visitor is of the need to identify a place with a person; that person through whom the place is remembered and through whom its image is animated and becomes centred in his own life experience.

It's rather important, therefore, that the staff of the Cathedral understand the nature of their own role: of the extent of their influence, of their responsibility and as a result, of the need to be master of the skills that go with it. It is easy to lose sight of this requirement under the heavy casing of sheer numbers; and to point to the difficulties or seeming impossibilities of making adequate response to the need to become "The person" (note the derivation of the latter word "parson") in the place. To do this must surely imply a process of individuation, where visitors are related to as individuals and where the crowd formation is penetrated. Impossible, surely, with such numbers.

And out of place too, perhaps? Possibly it is more appropriate to be remote. That would be consonant with the nature of the building in which by a proportion of the people still a reverential approach is adopted.

The requirement of the staff is to be available, as and when they are needed. Not intrusive, thrusting information when it is not sought or seeking to persuade and to evangelise where it is almost inappropriate; or to become helpful when help is not asked for; but simply to be alert to the sensitivities of the situation where all may be required of them - the overseas visitor, the distressed person or the pilgrim - or nothing other than the attitude that telepathically conveys that this is a hospitable place; that the welcome is more than the notice that says so and that the people are there ready to be talked with and able to relate easily to all comers

whenever they are needed.

No wonder so elusive a task and one easily avoiding definition has also escaped the attempt properly to address the nature both of the need and of the proper response. No wonder stewards and marshalls are recruited with little or no job description and no preparation except to stay close by a colleague for the first few days and see how he deals with the stickier parts, in which a hat is to be removed or a cigarette, or patience required with repetitive questions which are terribly dull or questions about ancestors which (also dull) are nearly impossible to answer.

Or to try to come level with complaints: usually to do with partial or total closure of the building with the authorities remaining unaware of any need to explain the circumstances or the length of closure or mitigating alternatives. Cathedrals can be slow to explain themselves, believing that they are in themselves a statement of purpose with little more needing to be said. Staff must make good here, distancing themselves from an infection of elitism which the magnitude of the building and its purpose can release.

To say that staff training is needed is to over-simplify. To recognise the genius of the place, to respond, as someone said, to the love of the place, to "topophilia", is to enable it to become also the fostering, facilitating environment. Training, in itself a limiting description, becomes learning which is project orientated. It is attitude and comprehension allied to techniques and skills which form the substance of training.

Insite is a management and training consultancy particularly concerned with heritage and the programme that it uses is the experience of people in doing the job used as a resource to learn how to do it better. And to experience as a result affirmation and support in a demanding job and advent of critical faculties and the objective view in relation to it.

These are achieved through staff working in pairs, in groups and with the help of written and visual material. The consultant from *Insite* becomes the facilitator: the outsider in the midst through whom the new perceptions of the task and new response, apprehension and understanding of the role are realised. A catalytic effect is achieved through the meeting of the people with the data of their experience in favour of new capabilities. And then trying out these capabilities in the public arena and returning for the critical support of colleagues and the experience of the motivated team.

Training pre-supposes commitment to the task, recognising that what we've got is not good enough: that because the task is hard to define we can rub along with no definition but an undifferentiated goodwill instead. One of the objectives of training is to produce that very definition.

Perhaps it is after all fairly simple. Perhaps it is to do with paying attention: with noticing the task and its history and the potential and its achievement. And not being blinded by figures.

Guided Tours

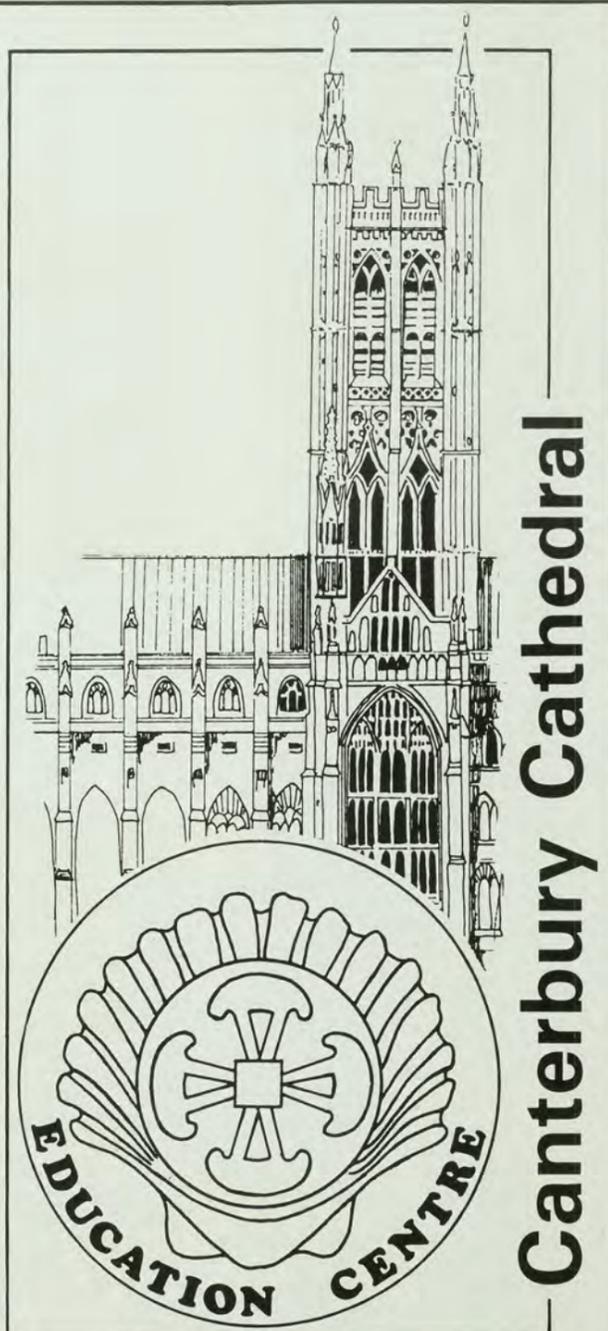


These are given by voluntary Cathedral Guides, who arrange their tours to suit the age range of the group and any particular interests which have been indicated beforehand. They can be in French if required. Tours should be booked at least a fortnight in advance.

In general the Dean and Chapter do not permit tours except by Cathedral Guides; but where teachers have been well briefed they may take their own parties by arrangement with the Centre.

**CATHEDRAL EDUCATION CENTRE
11 THE PRECINCTS
CANTERBURY
KENT**

(0227) 762862 EXT 133



Canterbury Cathedral

CHURCH TOURISM IN LINCOLNSHIRE

DR CHARLES KIGHTLY

Lincoln Diocesan Tourism Consultancy

THE CONSULTANCY

The Lincoln Diocesan Church Tourism Consultancy - 'the Consultancy' for short - has now completed its first year, and has just under two more to run. So far the only church tourism consultancy in England, it has its origins in a generous and imaginative scheme devised in 1987 by the Ecclesiastical Insurance Group, (the company which insures most British places of worship). To mark its centenary, EIG offered a grant of £45,000, spread over three years, to the winning entry in a competition for the best 'church tourism scheme'. In the event, two grants were given: one to a project covering the whole of Scotland, and the other to the Diocese of Lincoln.

To some extent at least, the success of the Lincoln entry was based on the fact that its compilers were able to attract advance promises of additional financial support from many ecclesiastical and local government authorities, including the Diocese itself, Lincoln Cathedral, the East Midlands Tourist Board, the county councils of Lincolnshire and Humberside, and seven district councils.

The Problem

This support, totalling some £9,000 a year, releases local awareness of the pressing problems facing the churches of Lincoln diocese. Stretching from the Humber to the Wash - its borders follow the old county of Lincolnshire, before the creation of 'Humberside' - the diocese covers a large and sparsely populated area, which has the smallest population per square mile of any comparable region in lowland Britain. Largely due to its mediaeval prosperity however, it is blessed (if that is the right word) with a very large number of Anglican churches, in fact some 660 of them. Thus some 60% of these churches are situated in communities of less than 500 people, and nearly 20% in communities of less than a hundred. These figures, moreover, represent the total adult population: churchgoers and church supporters are far fewer in number, and nearly half the parishes in Lincolnshire have church electoral rolls of less than fifty souls. Not surprisingly, therefore, all too many Lincolnshire churches are threatened with redundancy, and many more are gathered into unwieldy groups of up to sixteen parishes served by one single clergyman.

The Asset

It is only too easy, then, to view these churches as merely a problem, instead of as an asset and, in hard fact, virtually the only 'heritage' assets some parts of

Lincolnshire possess. Yet a potential asset they undoubtedly are, for among them are some of the very finest churches in England. Apart from a relatively few well-known buildings like Lincoln Cathedral and Boston 'Stump', nevertheless, this potential has so far remained effectively unrealised. Even large and magnificent churches like Louth, Grantham, Stow-in-Lindsey and the 'cathedrals of the Fens' are under-appreciated outside their immediate areas, and still fewer - either inside or outside Lincolnshire - have discovered (for instance) the unspoilt Georgian delights of Well and Langton-by-Spilsby or searched out tiny Coates-by-Stow, whose very remoteness has allowed it to escape sixteenth century Reformers and Victorian 'improvers' alike. Some, of course, would prefer this situation to continue, and indeed the sense of discovery experienced when first visiting such places is something to be preserved if at all possible. But to keep the secret too closely - to allow Lincolnshire churches to remain the preserve of the Pevsner-bearing, persevering few - is to do them a disservice. The contributions of experts alone will not keep the church roof on, or prevent the monuments crumbling away.

The Task - Promotion

The task of the Consultancy, therefore, is to convert the churches of the Diocese

from a problem into a viable asset: in short - 'To attract visitors to Lincolnshire churches, and explain visitors to the Lincolnshire Church'. The first part of the task, promotion, presents problems of its own. Churches have not so far been popular as a 'heritage' attraction, largely because of the 'dry-as-dust' (or 'musty-as-hassocks') ethos generally attached to them: unlike castles or 'stately homes', they are seen as lacking either romantic or 'human interest' appeal. In reality, of course, this is very far from being the case. Any building which has been the spiritual and social centre of a community for up to a thousand years must be (and nearly always is) full of human interest, even if this requires a change in traditional church interpretation to bring it out. Norman arches, however well preserved, may be of less interest to visitors than the surprising number of children on a monument, and Victorian feuds or Georgian church bands may arouse more curiosity than Perpendicular screens, however finely carved. Come back, Arthur Mee, all is forgiven!

Human interest factors like these play a large part in the selection of churches for the 'Treasures of Lincolnshire' project, the Consultancy's principal initiative during 1990-1. Focussing on fifteen churches ranging in period from Anglo-Saxon to



Visitors from London at St. James's Church, Louth.

Victorian, and distributed throughout the Diocese, this project aims to trace the development of Church and rural community life over ten centuries. Its elements include a full-colour booklet, specially designed exhibitions in each church, 'appetiser' displays at tourist centres, and a free trail map, as well as marketing nationally and even internationally. Meanwhile, 'tailor-made' coach tours of Lincolnshire churches - promoted by a national travel firm - have already begun, and are generating considerable interest: not least among the churches visited, each of which receives a donation of 50p - £1 per visitor, incorporated into the cost of the tour.

The Task - Persuading the Churches

Such tangible proof of the benefits of tourism is invaluable in carrying out the second part of the Consultancy's task: 'to explain visitors to the Lincolnshire Church. This is quite as important as promotion, for without a willingness to welcome visitors, there can be no church tourism at all. Nor can such a willingness be taken for granted, for although actual hostility to visitors is (comparatively) rare in the

Diocese, there remains a great deal of caution about making churches accessible. At worst, this springs from a conviction that the church is the private property of its congregation, but more often from an entirely natural concern for the security of the building and its contents - a concern frequently fuelled by scare stories in the media. (At the time of writing, the pilfering of a glass jug from one church and a modern table from another was being labelled 'New spate of church attacks') In an attempt to combat the 'fortress mentality' which results in permanently locked and dead churches ('No good to God or Man') the Consultancy has produced a document entitled 'Preserve and Display'. This advises church custodians on how to take sensible security measures (such as securing valuables in themselves) while keeping their churches relatively accessible, if only by means of notices stating clearly where the key can be obtained. Another reason why churches may not be accessible to visitors is a lack of local awareness of their historical importance and interest. This is particularly true in the parts of the Diocese (away from Lincoln, the East Coast and

the Fenland bulfields) where tourists are still comparatively rare. In one such district, the Rural Deanery centred on Gainsborough in north-west Lincolnshire, the Consultancy recently organised a programme designed to raise consciousness of local churches, which include at least one (Stow) of national importance, six with Anglo-Saxon towers, and the only Georgian town church in the county. This initiative included the production of a popular guide to all 29 Deanery churches, fortnightly articles in the local Press, a local radio programme, a highly successful coach tour, an evening class, and an Open Day enlivened by a treasure-hunt style 'Quiz Trail'. A similar initiative is now being planned in east Lincolnshire, where depopulation and church redundancy problems are especially acute - and where, therefore, the need for church tourism is particularly pressing.

For further information about the Lincoln Diocesan Church Tourism Consultancy, write to Dr. Charles Kightly, c/o The Diocesan Office, The Old Palace, Lincoln LN2 1PU, preferably enclosing an S.A.E.

look at the church: its significance in the story of the community is recognised almost instinctively.

But the facts also suggest that in village interpretation, or 'Telling the Story of Your Village' (to take words from the title of a recent SIBH weekend course at Otley, near Ipswich), the church and the secular organisations should work together. (When I use the word 'church', I mean to include the non-conformist churches with their stories too.) A good churchguide leaflet should probably start and finish with what we might call social and topographical history, while architectural description (interesting though it can be if well done) could be less dominant than it usually is, and grafted into its social as well as its ecclesiastical context.

Our 'Story of Your Village and How to Tell It' course at Otley perhaps spent too little time considering the role of the Church - but then we only had two days, and our main theme was communicating village history to the public, rather than resources and research. However we did visit the church at Otley, and our excellent local guide had got permission to show us its most enigmatic feature - a spring-fed baptistery, like an oval, stone bath, beneath the wooden floor of the vestry. We enjoyed the exercise of guessing what its story was - how old, built by whom - and might there have been some legend or local tradition to explain it? At this site (as at a motte site that we visited out in the fields) we found a feature with no satisfactory explanation: there must be a fascinating story - if only someone knew it! But on one thing we were agreed - that a puzzle or enigma well propounded is just as intriguing as a catalogue of accurate dates and known facts.

The other feature in the church that pleased us was a charmingly drawn map of the parish prepared by the local Women's Institute a few years ago. It did not attempt to tell the full history of the village, but to capture its character at a moment in time. It was not at all sophisticated, but its preparation must have been a memorable 'interpretational' experience for all who contributed to it, while its value as a record will increase generation by generation. And where better to place it than in the village church, where it can be seen and enjoyed by local people and visitors alike?

Now this has introduced the other point I wanted to raise: how can church/village history best be told?

As always, the first question to ask must be "To what audience?" There seem to be at least three. The first is the community itself - and there can be little doubt that a community historical or environmental project that involves as many people as possible - the churches, the school, the landowners, the Women's Institute, the pub (why not?) - is the most likely to be of benefit locally. And if the result is, like the map in Otley Church, some permanent record of the village's own perception of itself at a particular time, then not only



Visitors to Coates-by-Stow Church.

will visitors from outside enjoy it, but also local people in succeeding generations.

A second category - and this probably included most of us at the Otley weekend - are those who are already, wherever we live, deeply into our own local history. We are 'historate' (or whatever the jargon equivalent of literate and numerate is). We have our own kinds of questions to which we are seeking answers: we probably talk the language of local history, with terms like 'terriers' and 'advowsons' and 'enclosure awards' and 'tofts'. I don't suggest that this category deserves priority as an audience for village interpretation.

The third group, potentially the largest, is made up of casual visitors - perhaps the kind of persons that the Archdeacon of Sudbury has in mind - who arrive in our village because exploring the countryside is a pleasant recreation, often enhanced by unexpected discoveries. Such a visitor might be lucky enough to find (in perhaps one village in a hundred) that the village shop sells a booklet about the village. Much more likely, he will find a guide booklet, or at least 'information bats' or a duplicated sheet, in the local church. But alas, a high proportion of these will be reprints of something written decades ago, and probably printed in the same ancient format. "Lively, snappy pamphlets in good type, print and format" suggests the Archdeacon, "would be much better than a few piles of outdated newsletters so often in many of our churches".

By all means let us have good printed church and village guides - I have seen some really excellent ones - but let us also have the delight of coming, every now and again, across some novel and imaginative interpretive medium which will make the exploration of villages and the sport of

THE PARISH CHURCH AND VILLAGE INTERPRETATION

ANDREW PIERSSENÉ

Interpretive Planning and Design

Andrew Pierssené was recently involved in planning and running an SIBH weekend course at Otley College, near Ipswich, on 'The Story of Your Village and How to Tell It'. The relationship between church history and interpretation, and village history and interpretation, has been exercising his mind lately:-

I looked into a church in a Suffolk village recently (on a little quest of my own) and noticed on the back of a pew near the door a pile of Diocesan newsletters "The Church in Suffolk".

DON'T HIDE YOUR CHURCH HISTORY was the bold front-page heading of an article by the Archdeacon of Sudbury. "Suffolk" he writes "is a county attracting thousands of holiday-makers from all over England and the Continent, and they are all looking for amusement.

"Why don't we unite to give them what they want and wrap up a bit of education at the same time, with pleasure? It is not good that we possess so much of interest and keep it to ourselves."

The Archdeacon is right about the number of holiday-makers, especially if we include in that category weekend and day visitors just exploring by car or bicycle or on foot. Have you never looked through the pages of a visitors' book in a little church in a remote village, and been surprised at the

comments and addresses of those who have turned up there from all parts of Britain and Europe, and probably north America and Australia as well?

But I think the Archdeacon is unnecessarily self-conscious about providing 'education': the fact is that there are lots of people who like to explore villages and make a point of looking at the parish church, inside (if they can get in) and out. They like to have the church's interesting features pointed out to them, and such 'educational' information does not need to be somehow disguised or 'wrapped up'. Perhaps it is the way the story is 'unwrapped' that makes it attractive. We'll look at that later.

Now the implications of 'Church Interpretation' are worth considering. First, we may assume that the folk who are active in the life of any parish church are, almost by definition, citizens of the equivalent civil parish. They know their own community and territory like nobody else does. They are villagers just as much as church people.

Secondly, even if the church-goers in the community are now a minority, the church is still somehow the heart of the village. Most local people will have been christened there, while many were married and many will be buried there. It was

probably built at the expense of the Lord of the Manor or other wealthy residents in medieval times, and is maintained by the money-raising efforts (to which even non-churchgoers contribute) of the community today.

Thirdly, the church is almost certainly the oldest institution (though the 'Manor' may be older) in the village, and the oldest structure. Over 9,000 parishes were created in England from the early days of the Saxon church until the fourteenth century, and with various subsequent splits and minor boundary modifications, they survive to this day. The church building often stands conspicuously on the site it or its predecessors have occupied for a thousand years or more, above or in the centre of the settlement, and seems to symbolise it (look at Saxton's or Speed's county maps). For centuries the church was concerned not only with its parishioners' souls, but often their health and safety, their behaviour, their employment and their 'social security'. The church kept important local documents in the 'parish chest', and, since the registration of births, marriage and deaths was made compulsory in the sixteenth century, the church housed one of the two main local archives. The Manor held the other.

These facts go a long way to explain why visitors to a village nearly always have a

LIVING INTERPRETATION IN MUSEUMS

JANE MALCOLM-DAVIES

Researcher and Free-lance Consultant

The use of real people to re-enact the past in stately homes, museums and other historic sites is not new. But as it begins to move into the mainstream it is attracting plenty of attention.

Every bank holiday, banner headlines proclaim the latest in English eccentricity: "Weekend warriors storm heritage centre", is typical.

Amateur resources have held sway in an industry beset by cash shortages and bureaucracy. The re-enactment societies that have presented images of our past akin to cave dwelling or Hollywood movies no longer hold a monopoly on re-creations of the past. They are, however, notoriously badly organised and unreliable - for most society members, the pursuit of re-enactment is, at worst, a hobby and, at best, an enthusiasm.

Museums have begun to consider the use of actors - the Museum of the Moving Image (MOMI) and Wigan Pier have led the way - but are these theatre techniques the most appropriate to the kind of audience found at historic sites? Actors do offer professional communication skills but tend to lack the enthusiasm to amass the depth of knowledge fostered by amateur historical societies.

The English Heritage Special Events Unit, under Howard Giles' leadership, has encouraged re-enactment organisations to become more professional and has even offered financial incentives for battle societies to broaden their range of activities. Despite these moves toward domestic activities, Giles believes it is military matters that have the crowd-drawing appeal.

The adoption of the label "living history" by the former battle societies is an attempt to gain respectability as their concentration on military activity to the exclusion of domestic issues has provoked criticism.

Unfortunately, the "living history" buffs have created a picture of Britain's past which implies that Cavaliers and Roundheads (among other worthy historical characters) had not progressed far beyond the Stone Age. Goodrich Castle played host to a siege on August 12 & 13, which rendered a Royalist stronghold a slum. Rough hessian and bubbling cauldrons do not do justice to the organisation with which armies of the period were mustered or billeted.

English Heritage, ever short of money, also employs cheap pageant organisations with a commitment to showmanship rather than authenticity. Typical of these is the Lion Rampant, which propagates the myth of

Errol Flynn-style knights beating each other senseless while the ladies dance with each other rather than the knights. So much for chivalry and the courts of love. According to its organiser, this society spans the early Middle Ages to the Renaissance, without any alteration of costume or equipment.

Other societies which have emerged since the battle and pageant organisations, such

as the History Re-enactment Workshop and The White Company (1450-1500), have fought against the beer-swilling, boorish image still prevalent in larger societies, to present pictures of the past with a little more sensitivity and a broader appeal to the public. Andy Robertshaw, education officer at the National Army Museum, where the History Re-enactment Workshop did a series of displays, says he



Live Interpreters at Littlecote - putting the acting back into re-enacting.

looks for "Born again re-enactors", usually people who have been through the battle societies and want to take a more responsible approach to history.

The White Company (1450-1500) is committed to presentations of late medieval life that dispel the myths that life then was primitive and barbaric. But responsible interpretation is more expensive than approximations, and custodians and estate managers are reluctant to pay the higher fees these societies command.

Cadw, the Welsh Historic Monuments Commission, is typically strapped for cash and tends to use The Plantagenets, a society offering value-for-money Hollywood entertainment. Keith Allen, special events organiser, says "I can tell them what time to start and then leave them to get on with the show".

Allen is one of a large number of over-stretched organisers trying to boost visitor numbers by staging special events for which there is little financial support and almost no manpower.

The lack of directorial control, which would help steer amateur groups towards a more credible picture of the past is not the product of a stand-offish attitude but simply a dearth of curatorial time.

H Russel Robinson of the Royal Armouries set a precedent few have followed when he took the embryonic Ermine Street Guard in hand and set them on the road to authenticity. Their Roman armour (lorica segmentata) and displays of manoeuvres are exemplary in a world where few organisations devote sufficient resources to research or rehearsal.

A more recent example of this kind of positive direction from museums is at the Jorvik Viking Centre, where the annual festival employs the services of a former battle society, the Regia Anglorum. This museum, together with the university's environmental research unit, has advised the pseudo-Vikings on improvements to their equipment and demanded mannerly and informative interaction with the public. Dominic Tinner, the education officer, says "The amateur societies are given a careful briefing, including costume advice". This technique has weeded out the groups that failed the inauthenticity test.

This is no mean achievement when one considers the reputation of Viking re-enactment groups, (which tend to appear at fetes and carnivals in the summer): "We're soccer hooligans in the winter," was one memorable comment. Modern-day Barbarians like The Clan, a group of would-be escapees from the 20th century, "draw on a mish-mash of influences and beliefs which include mysticism, symbolism, a quasi-oriental search for inner peace, the martial arts and the power of fantasy" (Homer Sykes in Marie Claire, September 1989) to create romantic personas for themselves working on intuition rather than research.

These attempts to recapture the past are replicated to a certain extent by



The White Company (1450-1500) using first and third person interpretation.

professional interpreters under the more positive philosophy of enlivening history not as an antidote to mundanity. Nevertheless, the extent to which interpreters need to live the part is as lively a debate as the effectiveness of method acting.

The choice between first-person interpretation (the adoption of a character who lives in the past) and third-person interpretation (wearing a costume but speaking about the past) determines the extent to which period language and characterisation is appropriate.

Peter de Savary confronted this problem at Littlecote House, where his desire for more authentic entertainment inspired him to appoint Mark Wallis as manager. Wallis returned to Britain from Williamsburg (a re-created 18th century town in Virginia) where the complicated mix of first-person and third-person interpreters, together with actors and customised craft demonstrators tended to confuse visitors.

The solution at Littlecote was the Reformation Theatre Company - all of whom were professional actors. Each one also had a persona as a member of the Elizabethan household. They performed mummings plays and pantomimes with the emphasis firmly on audience participation, and formed the backbone of an extensive special events programme. "Battle societies lack focus and the ability to communicate effectively with the public," says Wallis, "The actors complemented their spectacle with a storyline. I'm trying to put the acting back into re-enacting".

Wallis' company, Past Pleasures, have moved on to provide actors for an English Heritage venture into live interpretation at Audley End. Richard Gray, regional presentation manager for the Midlands and East Anglia, identified a number of problems which crop up with most initiatives of this kind. "The use of period language is a difficulty, as is the visitors'

embarrassment at being expected to respond to an actor," he says.

A re-creation which has opted for first-person interpretation for ten years is that held at Kentwell Hall, where Patrick and Judith Phillips have recruited more than 200 volunteers for their three-week event each year. The project has invented a language - kindly referred to as "Tudorese", unkindly known as "Desperanto" - whereby participants use a pseudo-Shakespearean speech with thee and thou and the removal of "he didn't" and "he couldn't" in favour of "he did it not" and "Twas not possible for him".

This device has two effects - it helps to evoke an otherworldly atmosphere but also erects a barrier between the visiting public and the information they would like to learn. Gray believes this undermines the reason for having interpreters at all - if people are put off by the use of period language, it may be better to dispense with the characters altogether. But confident and clever use of language can add an extra dimension to re-enactments that are often concentrated on highly selective aspects of life in the past.

The Kentwell re-creations have successfully beaten off the problems of over-emphasis on military affairs by substituting a range of craft activities, ably demonstrated by costumed enthusiasts. This provides a series of interesting "lost" trades but errs in implying that industry in the Tudor period was primitive.

Dyeing, for example, had been a major chemical industry since the Middle Ages, and towns such as Flanders had become financial centres on the strength of it. At Kentwell, a few pots on a fire bubbling with onion skins tend to leave the visitor with an inaccurate impression.

Another problem at Kentwell Hall is the range of talent among the interpreters - the recruitment programme accepts volunteers who attend the event for a variety of

reasons. Some have natural charisma and a desire to teach that makes them approachable and informative but many others are there to gratify a political interpretation of Tudor England as a commune rather than an evolution of the feudal system.

The relationship between the first-person interpreter and the public can be strained—visitors often feel they are made to look ridiculous by an over-confident approach or fail to gain anything from the experience because they do not grasp what the interpreter is saying. This interaction works better where a number of interpreters work together, drawing visitors in and protecting them against direct confrontation.

The White Company (1450-1500) uses this technique in an informal way - often speaking to each other in character and answering questions as members of the society looking back at the period they re-create. This kind of impromptu dialogue can bring out information about the past in a very entertaining way.

This society has concentrated on the 50 years known as the Wars of the Roses, and within that on the 1470s. Clothing and equipment is far more accurately reproduced at re-creations which have a timespan. Beamish Open Air Museum's curator of interpretation John Price says its re-creation will be improved by a recent decision to focus on the year 1913 -

clothing for demonstrators there will now be more consistent.

Costume is a particular area of difficulty for all re-enactments - apart from the cost, accurate dress for the time and status of the people being portrayed demands painstaking research. Participants often have to be cajoled into uncomfortable habits. Hats, for example, only recently became optional wear, and they tend to be noticeable by their absence at re-creations as far afield as Beamish Open Air Museum and Morwellham Quay.

This Victorian museum, near Tavistock, has a number of particular costume problems: "If we had known how difficult it would be when we started, we would not have done it", was one interpreter's comment. The low pay on offer attracts people with less than 100% commitment to the job - they tend to congregate together, dropping out of their 19th century characters, and are reluctant to wear corsets and remove make-up, both of which are essential for an accurate picture of 1860s ladies.

Morwellham has suffered through lack of initial investment and a recruitment drive that has failed to produce the right kind of interpreters. Neither of these problems has helped the museum foster live interpreters who interact with the public with enthusiasm and confidence which helps visitors overcome their embarrassment with ease.

Blists Hill at Ironbridge provides a week's training course for its third-person demonstrators, which includes lectures on body language, use of English, how to build up information about the period they are re-creating and how to deal with crises. Lawrence Knott, the demonstrator co-ordinator, explains the Blist Hill solution to successful interaction: "We like to make the public feel at home. The demonstrators natter to visitors, they don't lecture them."

Out on the site, it tends to be the volunteers with bright personalities who have most success with the public. Training courses, such as those run at Blists Hill, cannot turn everybody into perfect communicators. Natural enthusiasm for the past, a good speaking voice and pleasant confidence seem to be the prerequisites for successful live interpreters.

At the Museum of the Moving Image, Mo Hurd, the actors' company director, says she looks for experience in street theatre, community projects or theatre-in-education before letting actor/guides loose on the public. Despite the expected level of interaction, the interpreters do have a problem with isolation at MOMI. Each has a location to which they are tied - live interpretation seems to be more successful where people can bounce off each other, rather than work alone.

At the other extreme, however, playlets, such as those performed at Wigan Pier, provoke little reaction from the audience - a performance does not allow the level of interaction offered by first-person interpretation. The History Re-enactment Workshop's "1688 - Glorious Revolution?" exhibition lasted all day for nine weekends. The participants portrayed characters locked in the tedium of a late 17th century guardroom. Visitors could ask them questions about their everyday lives, without feeling they were crossing a procenium between actors and audience.

Nevertheless, there were barriers: the language, the costume, the manners, etc. but perhaps museums should not fight shy of a few barriers - if they are built of authentic materials - at least live interpretation offers an opportunity for visitors to take issue with the pictures of the past so produced.

In stark contrast to television, that easy, undemanding, insulated box in the corner, which has done so much to distort our views of history, live interpreters startle visitors into an appreciation of the past and, says Mark Wallis of Littlecote "They are a resource which may be used imaginatively, as Shakespeare said, to 'trick into learning with a laugh'".

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The Jorvik Viking Festival - managing amateur resources to good effect.
(Photo - York Archaeological Trust)

TOURIST POLLUTION. The Ninth Nicholas Bacon Memorial Lecture given at The Royal Society of Arts. November 23rd 1988.

John Julius Norwich

Let me begin with a disclaimer: 'tourist pollution'—stark, dismissive and disagreeable as it sounds—is not my phrase. I first heard it uttered, some four or five years ago, by no less an authority than the Mayor of Venice, Mario Rigo; and, as you may well imagine, the Mayor of Venice knew what he was talking about. When in 1970 I first became involved with the preservation of that most magical of cities, we knew—or thought we knew—precisely what were the dangers that Venice had to face: there was a threat from the sea, which meant flooding; the threat from the land, which meant subsidence; and the threat from the air, which meant the sulphurous fumes from the industrial zones of Mestre and Marghera (and also, to some extent, from the thousands of domestic central heating systems within the city itself) which were corroding the stone, the marble and the brick—the very fabric of Venice. Despite spectacular progress in the past twenty years, all three of these threats still exist; but many of us are beginning to wonder whether a fourth threat—that which comes from the twelve million tourists who pour annually into the city—will not ultimately prove the most dangerous of all.

During the May Bank Holiday in 1987, Venice very nearly burst. In the space of just five hours, 630 tourist coaches disgorged 36,000 tourists, while ferries brought 30,000 more from the beach resorts across the lagoon. So terrifying were the crowds that, for the first time in history, the causeway connecting the city with the mainland had to be closed. But that, so far, has been an isolated instance—even though it is virtually certain to occur ever more frequently in the years to come; so let us rather look at something a good deal more normal—the situation which prevails in Venice for at least three months of the year, and for another three in an only very slightly modified form.

The first point to be made is that of those twelve million tourists, half come for just a few hours—day trippers from as far away as Austria or Milan. Already around eight o'clock in the morning, the first of the tourist buses comes rolling across the causeway from the mainland; over the next three hours it is followed by—quite literally—hundreds of others, each of them disgorging some fifty or sixty people, and sometimes more, at the Piazzale Roma. From there they board the *vaporetti* and descend the entire length of the Grand Canal to the Piazza San Marco, filling boats so full that it is virtually impossible to embark at any of the immediate stops

and thus effectively depriving the working population of Venice of their only system of public transport at the one time of the day when they need it most. Once arrived on the Piazza they settle down, and there the vast majority of them remain till about half-past four, when they are scooped up again by their tour agents and shepherded back to the *vaporetti*, once again taking over the system for another two or three hours. Less than a quarter even enter the Basilica of St Mark—admission to which is



Tourists in Piazza San Marco

(Photo - John Hemming)

free—and fewer still venture inside the Doge's Palace which adjoins it; most of them content themselves with a short stroll along the Riva where they buy an ice cream, a souvenir or two, and a couple of cans of beer or Coca-Cola, returning as soon as possible to the crowd in the Piazza. Apart from these inconsiderable purchases—to which must be added several packets of bird seed for the pigeons, already disgustingly overfed—they spend virtually no money in Venice; nearly all the one-day tours include a packed lunch, which is consumed on the Piazza and which explains its principal eyesore—the hundreds or so rubbish bins which permanently disfigure one of the most beautiful urban spaces in the world and are even worse when, from about eleven o'clock onwards, they are full to overflowing and each is surrounded by its own *cordon sanitaire* of paper bags, tin cans and half-eaten hamburgers.

Now the Piazza was designed as a meeting-place for large numbers of people, and indeed looks better when moderately populated; but it was also designed to be

an elegant focus of Venetian life, and this—at least during the summer, the season above all when it should come into its own—it can no longer be. Worse still, it—together with its neighbouring Piazzetta—is being physically ground down by these remorseless throngs: thirty years ago, the sculptures surrounding the bases of the two columns by the Molo were clearly identifiable; today, used as they are from morning till night—and frequently all night—as seats, picnic tables, pillows and

repositories for bursting kit bags, the carved figures have been worn almost smooth.

I have spoken about Venice at what may have seemed somewhat inordinate length merely because it is one of the cities in which tourist pollution is to be found in its extreme form, as well as being one which I happen to know the best. But it is hardly necessary for me to emphasize that it is not the only one. In Italy alone Rome, Florence and—to an only slightly lesser extent—Siena have similar stories to tell: four years ago in Rome, I was anxious to visit the Vatican Museums, where I had spent many memorable hours in my student days. Local friends warned us to be there well before the Museum opened at nine; we accordingly arrived at a quarter past eight, only to find a queue well over a hundred yards long. An hour later, none the less, we were safely within the building; alas, it was hardly conducive to scholarship, let alone to pleasure. The serious-minded visitors—and there were many of them—were hopelessly outnumbered by perhaps a dozen separate

parties of school children, apparently unshepherded and certainly uncontrolled, shouting at the tops of their voices and playing hide-and-seek among the statuary. How, one wondered, would the budding Berenson, the embryonic Kenneth Clark, ever manage to find the peace and tranquility necessary for them to contemplate these works as they deserved?

In this country, as we all know, the situation is very little better. We have long been accustomed to the rows of motor coaches which nowadays line Constitution Hill from Buckingham Palace to Hyde Park Corner and then continue, after only a short interruption, all the way up the east side of the Park to Marble Arch. They can hardly be said to improve the view, but at least they do not seriously incommode us; and we can argue that they are a small enough price to pay for the vast quantities of foreign exchange earned by the tourist industry. But do we feel the same when we enter Westminster Abbey on a summer morning, to find a crowd indistinguishable from that through which we would have to battle at Selfridge's, three shopping days before Christmas? Nor is Westminster an exception: parts of the south aisle of Canterbury Cathedral are now one and a half inches lower than they used to be, while the nearly four million visitors who annually visit the Tower of London are rapidly wearing away the ancient Kentish ragstone walls and steps—many of which have been there for the best part of a thousand years.

It is now more than five years since the Dean of Salisbury gave his consent to the levying of admission charges into his Cathedral. True, the charges were in theory voluntary; those who categorically refused to pay would not be forcibly disbarred from the building, and there was in addition a small corner by the entrance reserved for prayer, for which no payment was even suggested. But these were only palliatives; a turnstile, visible or invisible, was in place. The Cathedral was no longer what it had been for seven hundred years, a house of God that opened its arms to all. And where Salisbury led, other cathedrals have followed. We cannot blame the Deans and Chapters; their modest charges have made no significant difference, alas, to the numbers of visitors, but at least they have gone some way towards providing for the hugely increased costs—of guardians and guides and stewards, of miles of druggit to protect the stone from the onslaught of a thousand stiletto heels, and even—I am told—of insurance premiums, since many a modern-day visitor, slipping on a worn flight of steps or banging his head on the lintel of a low doorway into the cloister, will not hesitate to sue. No, we cannot blame the authorities; but we can remember what our cathedrals once were, and look upon what many of them are today, and lament.

And let us not for a moment imagine that the tourist boom has reached its apogee; recent statistics suggest, on the contrary, that it has hardly begun. Let me take just one example. The countless Japanese who

seem to be flooding into Europe in ever-increasing numbers represent in fact only a small vanguard of the great army which is to be expected in a few years' time. At present only six per cent of the population travels abroad; over the next decade it has been calculated that that proportion will have risen to some fifty per cent. That means that for every Japanese tourist we see in London today there will be eight or nine by the turn of the century. And by then Japan will not be the only country of the Far East making a sizeable impact on the tourist industries of Britain and Europe; the South Koreans are only just beginning to discover the delights of foreign travel; with them too, what is now only a trickle may well become an avalanche. And what is true of South Korea is equally true of Hong Kong, and of Singapore, and—above all—of Taiwan; their outgoing tourist industries, too, have so far scarcely got off the ground, but within a very few years they too will be making their presence felt. Similar surges may be expected from South America and if Mr Gorbachov's *perestroika* goes on in its present direction—from the Soviet Union and possibly even other countries of Eastern Europe. Meanwhile, of course, the old familiar tide from Western Europe and the United States shows no sign of abating, and may indeed display a dramatic increase if the cost of air transport for the tourist continues to diminish.

These vast migrations of people—which, though mercifully temporary, far exceed in their actual numbers the great invasions by the Goths, Huns and Vandals of the early centuries of the Christian era—cannot but have a profound effect on their host countries: an effect which is by no means exclusively economic. Let us consider, for example, a sequence of events which is being repeated time and time again—in the Caribbean, the Indian Ocean, parts of the Pacific and—by no means least—around the eastern shores of the Mediterranean. The first scene—or perhaps it is more of a prologue—is a beautiful, warm, unspoilt bay, with a few villages scattered around it whose inhabitants continue to maintain the traditional way of life of their fathers and grandfathers before them. Scene two depicts the arrival of the developers. Negotiations begin, much coffee is drunk, and the land is finally bought—sometimes at a knock-down price, sometimes at a grossly inflated one: it hardly matters, the deal is struck. Then the bulldozers move in. Within a week the primeval beautiful bay is gone for ever: in its place is a churned-up, chewed-up vista of desolation, a dense miasma of heat and dust out of which there gradually rise those vast slabs of steel-grey concrete whose eventual names—the Bellevue or the Splendide or the Riviera Palace—somehow constitute a further insult to the land that they have desecrated.

In scene three we witness the tourist invasion. The hotels are ready for them—or almost: the sand is thick with frying bodies, sizzling in Ambre Solaire; the sea is

loud with the roar of motor boats and the hiss of water skis. At seven o'clock every morning teams of students earn their summer holiday by wandering up and down the beach with plastic bags, filling them with hamburger boxes, plastic bottles and beer cans. The desecration is complete.

Or is it? Alas, the worst is yet to come. It is only a few years later still that the full extent of the damage at last becomes apparent. This is the damage done to the hearts and minds—perhaps even the souls—of the local inhabitants. With their cafés and their discos, their bodegas and their boutiques, they have—very likely—acquired wealth on a scale undreamt of a decade before; but their pride has gone, and—to a very real extent—their morale as well. I have known villages, especially in Greece and Turkey, in which, only ten short years ago, a passing traveller would have been invited into any peasant home, offered an ouzo or a raki and perhaps a spoonful of jam, and had a handful of ripe plums or a bunch of grapes pressed into his hand before he went on his way. Such things, even in remote villages, seldom occur today. Nowadays the traveller is far more likely to be immediately identified as a plum himself, and a plum ripe for the plucking. For the sad, inescapable truth is that tourism brutalizes—and brutalizes not only the tourist himself but those who minister to his needs. Self-respect gives place to servility, good manners to surliness, open friendliness and hospitality to cupidity and suspicion.

Have I exaggerated? perhaps I have. I do not doubt that, even in Lanzarote or Benidorm, you may find exceptions to this rule, particularly if it is still fairly early in the season. But, as I have already pointed out, this is only the beginning. At this very moment as I speak, several thousand new hotels are in the course of construction around the shores of the Mediterranean alone; and it is the same story in Thailand and Tahiti, in Mexico and Kenya, at the Grand Canyon and the Great Barrier Reef, in the West Indies and in other more modest archipelagos like the Seychelles and the Maldives, whose very names, in our parents' generation, were known to few people other than collectors of postage stamps. In Europe and America, too, the spectacular increase in the numbers of visitors from the Far East will still further increase the difference between the tourist and his surroundings and thus harden the attitudes of which I was speaking a few moments ago. Even if you feel, therefore, that today I am being unnecessarily alarmist, I can assure you that my words will be the palest of reflections of the situation as we shall see it by, let us say, the opening years of the twenty-first century.

There: I have devoted more than a third of the time available to me in setting out the worst aspects of the problem as I see it; I could easily have devoted two-thirds. I have not even mentioned the overcrowding of the skies, the nightmare sufferings of the tourists themselves, obliged to wait—often with small children—anything up to twenty-four hours in departure lounges

filled to bursting point. Nor have I even touched on the appalling toll of road accidents. (Have you noticed, incidentally, how whenever we read of a coach crash it is almost invariably a tourist charter and practically never a bus running on its normal scheduled service?) I have said not a word about the damage sustained by monuments such as the Acropolis at Athens, which has been trampled over by more people in the past twenty years than in all the two and a half thousand years of its previous existence. I remember how, in the 1950s, it used to be open until midnight on the three days spanning the full moon; one could go up there after dinner in the Plaka and, as likely as not, find oneself the only person there except the night-watchman. Now, the Parthenon cannot be approached at all—even in the daytime—but must be looked on only from a safe, respectful distance from behind the permanent barriers. Ten thousand hands a day—fifty thousand fingers—all brushing along the same column at the same height, for months at a time, don't—after a decade or two—leave very much of it left.

And it doesn't even need to be hands or fingers; the very presence of too many human beings in an enclosed space is quite enough to trigger off the process of decay. We raise the temperature, we breathe out vapour, we produce a fall-out of dust and organic particles of one kind or another, and the effects can be disastrous—as for example with the magnificent frescoes by Mantegna adorning the little Camera degli Sposi in the Palace of the Gonzagas in Mantua, which have suffered appalling deterioration in the last ten years. And not even the Sistine Chapel is safe: a most alarming report published two years ago revealed that the numbers of visitors regularly raise the temperature by as much as five degrees centigrade, and the humidity in proportion. The warmed air then rises, carrying particles of dust and dirt up to the frescoes, while the fluctuating humidity causes a crystallization of salts on their surface which are in themselves highly corrosive.

For the most dramatic example of such damage, we have those astonishing prehistoric cave paintings at Lascaux in the Dordogne which, after very few years on regular display, developed a curious creeping mould that threatened to destroy them altogether and obliged the authorities to close them to the public for ever. With patience and persistence it is now occasionally possible to arrange a visit in special circumstances, applying a year or more in advance; the less privileged, or less far-sighted, have to be content with an artificial cave which is, they are assured, an exact replica of the original, with all the paintings immaculately copied by expert palaeontologists; and very impressive, I am told, it is. But it is hardly a substitute for the real thing.

But enough of exposition. We now have to consider the possible solutions—or rather, since the problem is fundamentally insoluble, the best available palliatives. Our starting point, which we must take as



The spread of concrete along the Mediterranean shoreline.

axiomatic, is that there are certain places in the world—St Peter's for example, or the Louvre, or the Taj Mahal—which are visited by far more people than they can properly accommodate without losing their character or failing in their purpose. Very well: the number of these visitors must be limited. But how? Obviously, the easiest way would be simply to raise the prices of admission; but tourists, almost by definition, have money to spend, and the huge increases necessary before significant numbers of them were discouraged would effectively debar such buildings (or collections, or whatever they might be) from the less well-off people of the host countries—by whose taxes, after all, they are largely maintained.

A far fairer way, it seems to me, would be to eliminate in the first instance all those visitors who are not particularly keen to see them anyway; those, for example, who have booked on a fortnight's comprehensive coach tour without any very clear idea of what they will be seeing and find themselves on the Acropolis or the Ponte Vecchio for no other reason than that it happens to be Tuesday. (This category also includes those who have just enjoyed a fortnight's beach holiday and are taken on a 'city tour' simply to fill up the hour or two before they have to go on to the airport.) Such a measure, it need hardly be said, would arouse a frenzied wail from the coach companies; but the coach companies have been coining money since the tourist boom began, and it is high time they understood that the world's artistic and architectural heritage does not exist exclusively for their profit.

The advantages of such a measure would be twofold: it could be introduced quite easily—by the simple means of closing all the tourist coach parks or by pricing them out of existence; and it would not debar anyone prepared to take a little time and trouble. In effect, the responsible

authorities would be saying: 'You are more than welcome to come and visit us; all we ask is that you should find your own way here—either coming in your own car, or going to your local railway station and buying a ticket, or taking the regular public bus. This will very probably cost you less than a package tour, as well as giving you far more freedom; and it is, after all, no more than what every traveller had to do until well into living memory and what a considerable number still do today.' In cities like Venice where, thanks to the shortage of accommodation the excursion traffic represents a remarkably high percentage of the total, I would estimate that this measure alone would reduce the crowds in St Mark's by some thirty or forty per cent. It might not be enough, even then; but it would at least be a step in the right direction.

Another idea which is being widely considered is to persuade the tour operators to take their clients to a greater range of places. After all, an uncrowded two-star site can be a good deal more satisfying than a jam-packed three-star one, involving hours of standing in queues; and while it would obviously be unrealistic to attempt to short-change the visitor to Athens with the Theseum instead of the Parthenon, it should not be too hard to plan, for example, a tour of Italy, France or Spain—or England, for that matter—which, while avoiding all the obvious honeypots, would be every whit as satisfying and not one jot less enjoyable.

The next measure that will become increasingly necessary—indeed, has already become necessary in certain places—may prove a rather more bitter pill to swallow, since it involves the reconsideration of a principle that we have all long taken for granted and since it may in the long run affect each and every one of us. Until now, we have seldom if ever needed to question the fact that the world's

great works of art are more or less freely available, to be seen at relatively small cost at any reasonable time: all that we have to do is to present ourselves at the door during opening hours. This facility is wonderfully convenient—though I am not sure that we all consciously appreciate it—but the sad truth is that it may not be with us much longer. There may well come a day—and sooner rather than later—when we shall have to book a visit to the Louvre or the Sistine Chapel just as we have to book for *Les Misérables* or *The Phantom of the Opera*—weeks, or even months, in advance.

In this country the National Trust is already struggling manfully to deal with what it describes as 'over-visiting'—a concept undreamt-of even as little as ten years ago, but now, in quite a few of its more popular properties, a constant headache. The Trust does not yet demand advance reservations, but it does when necessary issue 'timed tickets'; in other words, a visitor arriving at, let us say, Chartwell at half-past two in the afternoon may, if the house is too full, be given a ticket allowing him entry at four o'clock. Whenever possible he will be advised as to how he can most profitably spend the intervening hour and a half; perhaps by visiting another house nearby which may be every bit as interesting and—if we are still talking about Chartwell—a good deal more beautiful, but which attracts only a fraction of the people. As an alternative, an increasing number of National Trust houses maintain an exhibition or an audio-visual presentation running constantly in one of the outbuildings to keep impatient visitors occupied and, with any luck, to increase their understanding and enjoyment of the house itself when their turn finally comes.

The same system is being employed more and more in many of the great English gardens: Stourhead for example, or Sissinghurst, where every new and riveting book by Nigel Nicolson about his parents' private life is certain to attract another twenty thousand or so visitors a year. It is every bit as important in such gardens as it is in historic houses: it stands to reason that a relatively modest house such as Chartwell, for example, cannot begin to accommodate the quarter of a million or so visitors who annually demand admission; the floors, the carpets, the staircases, the whole fabric of the house is ultimately destroyed. Similarly at Stourhead, where six or seven thousand people can be expected on a single Saturday afternoon in summer, the paths are eroded beyond the point where they can naturally regenerate themselves, the noise caused by the few deauroys the enjoyment of the many and, in short, the beauty, peace and tranquillity which are the entire *raison d'être* of the place simply cease to exist.

The same problem, in an only slightly different form, arises in the open spaces of 'outstanding natural beauty' owned by the National Trust. Here, by definition, there can be no question of timed tickets: there



Stourhead at the right density?

is no charge for admission, and no control. There is, however, the same remarkable effective way of reducing numbers that I suggested in another context earlier in this lecture: simply by not making things too easy. One most successful expedient is to cut down on signposting. The determined ones, those who love and understand the countryside, those who have taken the trouble to provide themselves with a map, will find their way easily enough without having to be assisted at every single turning.

Another is to site the car park some little distance—just a few hundred yards—from the beauty spot itself. For the aged or the infirm, special arrangements can easily be made: but it is astonishing how many perfectly able-bodied drivers are put off by the prospects of ten minutes' walk at the end of their journey.

Various surveys undertaken by the Trust—the most revealing was made at Runnymede, one August Bank Holiday a few years ago—showed that a considerable percentage of visitors never progressed beyond the car park. Once there, they opened up the boot, unpacked a picnic which they ate either inside the car or immediately behind it, staring up the exhaust pipe, after which they went sound asleep in the back seat or played football with their children around the other parked cars. Then—when they woke up or the game was over, and a good time had been had by all—they drove happily away.

I hope that, in this lecture, I have not sounded puritanical or élitist. On the contrary, I want people to enjoy themselves, and I want as many people as possible to see—and appreciate, because if they don't appreciate there is no point in their seeing—all the loveliest things, natural and artificial, that this world has to offer. But not, surely, to point where the loveliness of those things—or indeed those things themselves—are destroyed, which is what is now happening. And there is another danger too: that the authorities,

whoever they may be, will continue to turn a blind eye until it is too late, and will not only take no steps to check uncontrolled tourism, but will continue, as at present, to do everything in their power to encourage it.

The time has now come, I steadfastly believe, when all the developed countries of Western Europe should set an example and close down their National Tourist Boards. We shall be told, of course, that tourism is one of our most important growth industries; we must reply that now it has grown enough. In any case, it will not grind to a halt simply because it no longer receives official encouragement. People will always travel when they can, and I am not for a moment suggesting that they be prevented from doing so. What I do suggest is that we are now in the position of the man falling from the top of a skyscraper, who murmurs to himself as he hurtles past the tenth floor, 'Well, I'm all right so far'. Surely it is our duty, before it is too late, to take a long hard look where our present insanely short-sighted policies are leading us; and to take action, while we still can, to stem a flood which, if it continues unchecked, threatens to engulf us all.

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CHAIRMAN'S CHATTER

By the time you read this it will be coming up to Christmas - so a very happy Christmas to you all!

In recent weeks there have been a couple of television programmes and an interview given by Sir David Wilson in the *Independent* (October 18th) which have done nothing to enhance either the role or status of interpretation in the field of leisure in general and museums in particular.

I believe that, despite views to the contrary expressed in the above, interpretation has a very important role to play in presenting stories and bringing places and collections alive for the public. This can be done with a recreational and commercial bias, increasingly important for survival, without threatening academic integrity. For several years now, this issue has been largely avoided with the result that the "purist museum specialists" and the "leisure developers" have moved further and further apart. The time has now come to redress this and I invite readers to open the debate within these pages. Unless interpreters tackle this, the gulf between the two will continue to widen.

PUBLICATIONS

NEW MUSEUMS - A START UP GUIDE
By Timothy Ambrose.
Scottish Museums Council/HMSO £5.50

The Scots have always been a pragmatic race. The list of their practical inventions is far longer than you imagine. Radar, road surfaces and the rotary engine; the fountain pen, television and the thermos flask to name half a dozen. Oh, and yes, Mrs Keiller invented marmalade, twenty five years before Charles Macintosh first put on his waterproof mac.

In interpretation, too, the Scots have shown their practical nature. From Patrick Geddes through to the Landmark Centre at Carrbridge. Add the Countryside Commission for Scotland's Battleby demonstration area and the people-orientated Scottish Museums Council and you get some idea of the down-to-earth help that's available north of the border.

Tim Ambrose's book is another example of this straightforward assistance. It should help the reader to avoid some of the pitfalls in setting up a new museum.

"Museums are fun," says the preface. "But they bring with them moral, financial and legal responsibilities which are both serious and onerous."

The guide leads the reader carefully through a hierarchy of decision making: asking questions and prompting thoughts. It sometimes actively tries to dissuade the reader from establishing yet another museum.

Although the guide is written from a Scottish stance, readers will find few points which are not appropriate to an English or Welsh situation. And Tim Ambrose takes great care to avoid any preconceived ideas. Lively, well-written and sometimes humorous, it makes worthwhile reading whether you are establishing, re-assessing or vaguely considering a new museum (or complementary ways of interpreting our past).

A pity that the pricing is to HMSO standards, they're certainly not in the business of "stack 'em high, sell 'em cheap," and although it's a well laid out book, interspersed with a handful of Larry cartoons, it could have benefited from more illustrations and possibly a case study or two.

But to have condensed so much information into 64 pages is no mean feat, and Tim Ambrose's writing is so lucid that the book can be read from cover to cover, or delved into as a reference work.

Perhaps reading the guide should be a precondition before applying for financial support for new or expanding museums and heritage centres?

Museums are fun, take care!

Bill Breakell

HERITAGE INTERPRETATION
Vol 1. *The Natural and Built Environment*;
Vol 2. *The Visitor Experience*,
London: Belhaven Press. £29.50
Edited by David Uzzell.

Only a year ago, and less than a mile away from my desk, the Second World Congress on Heritage Presentation and Interpretation took place. Papers from this ambitious event - although participation did not quite meet the 'global' ambition - are now edited and published in two volumes. What was the 'centre of the world' for interpretive experts is now transmuted and may extend its influence in printed form.

The well-edited and designed pair of books provide a solid library purchase for all institutions with 'interpretation' and 'heritage' on their agendas or course lists. Most papers have transferred well from event presentation to readable text, though overall there is a tendency towards the middle ground of discursive instance and pithy message, to the relative exclusion of detailed practical accounts or reasoned theoretical arguments. A combined index and a reference list would have been useful, if only to track the jargon and Tilden users.

There is much here to stimulate the college tutorial, much of unsettle the practitioner taking a breath between the latest round of proposals, sufficient indeed, for groups of interpreters to reappraise their purpose.

In all there are forty-nine papers, together with Uzzell's volume introductions which, inevitably, try to conduct a scratch

orchestra in its first performance. Rather than attempt sweeping generalisations which would only serve to underline my own prejudices, the SIBH readership deserves a blow-by-blow account.



Interpretation as Reconstruction. Zuider Zee Open Air Museum.

THE HERITAGE INDUSTRY

In his opening paper, Robert Hewison, summarises the main arguments in his critical book, seeing the positive heritage values of stewardship, scholarship and identity as under threat and citing a Conference theme, 'Can the truth be commercially viable?' as evidence of the emerging ideology. Peter Rumble of English Heritage begins to refute the change, but is unsteady on the line between authenticity and pulling-power, concluding that 'too often merit is judged solely in commercial terms.' A Belgian view from Marc Laenen pursues this discussion further in terms of cultural identity and quality of life, terms used in France and Belgium, but strangely absent from Anglo-American literature. Merlin Waterson (omitted from the 'List of Contributors') reflects on recent National Trust schemes and the guarded approach to interpretation therein.

Commerce has militated against any satisfactory development of what David Uzzell explores in 'The Hot Interpretation of War and Conflict.' His essay is one of the very few here to demand personal reassessment from the reader, changes in behaviour which he feels should also be possible as interpretation tackles war and its atrocities. 'When did you last feel uncomfortable through interpretation?' it

takes an archaeologist, Peter Fowler to extend this matter, although no other paper faces the fundamental issue as to whether visitor 'satisfaction' precludes visitor provocation. If Peter Stone and Robert Mackenzie had re-worked their essay on 'Excluded Past in Education' to focus on interpretation, their arguments, too, would have enhanced this area of debate.

Don Aldridge's title is an engaging one - 'How the Ship of Interpretation was Blown Off Course in the Tempest: Some Philosophical Thoughts' and in a subject that has kept theory in the back cupboard, here is an offering from a British 'founding father' to really get your teeth into. Citing works which we should have read (e.g. Glacken's, *Traces on the Rhodian Shore* and Thomas's *Man and the Natural World*) he hints at the intellectual realm of geographical and historical study to which interpretation is handmaiden. Aldridge draws together a clear statement of conservation philosophies, attitudes and messages, touches on regional ethology, landscape values, and hermeneutics to arrive at a terse and biting criticism of contemporary interpretation. I share many of his criticisms and am struck, also by the failure of most interpreters to recognise any part of their intellectual origins so implicit in Aldridge's essay.

Hester Davies' paper on perceptions of the archaeological site is too brief, but Marion Meek manages useful practical insights from the relationship between archaeologist, builder and the public in Northern Ireland.

To summarise this section, a quote from Bruce Craig of the U.S. National Parks and Conservation Association:

'While professional historians skim the surface of the past, interpreters can delve deeper into the realm of 'time passed.' And if interpreters are willing to expand their imagination and teach visitors to explore their own visions of historical reality, then ... visitors will gain a sense of historic place.'

What emerges from the veiled hints and asides in many of these papers is that the opportunity to delve deeper is not being taken. Far from being a research-based and place-focused process, interpretation has become a catch-word for the patterned response to the presumed popular needs of visitor centre or signage. Intellectual roots, always tenuous, have been torn away and the value questions which should pervade a youthful profession, are largely ignored.

INTERPRETING THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

Adrian Phillips of the Countryside Commission manages a concise and informative history of countryside interpretation and provides further reinforcement to many of the previous messages, adding two with precision.

'The countryside was never a museum and we should avoid portraying it as such.'

'... as professional interpreters, you should

challenge your clients if you feel you are being asked to convey a cloying, even dishonest, story.'

In the cause of honesty, Kenneth Olwig examines the differences between 'nature' and 'countryside' interpretation, using Danish examples. The structure of the volume then begins to fade. Elizabeth Beckmann's essay on interpretation in Australian National Parks is institutional in tone, and Astrida Uptis' account of interpreting cross-cultural sites in those parks leaves the reader asking for instance and evidence of the conflict resolution which must occur. Jorge Morales' introduction to interpretation in Spain also suffers from brevity. David Sayers' note on his third world tourism activities deserved the questioning voice of a co-author.

I found Susan Gubbay's essay on U.K. marine environmental interpretation useful because of the basic, structured approach to a novel environment which it contained. Evidence of research and rigour is also found in Timothy O'Riordan's project on 'Interpretation, Participation and National Park Planning.' It is interesting to note the shift in interpretive interest from natural/countryside to heritage/built environments evidenced by these books. The 'natural' environment section is surprisingly slim, and may result from the financial and sector shifts from publicly-funded rural landscapes to private and privatised heritage sites.

TRAINING INTERPRETERS

The O'Riordan paper provides a suitable introduction to those on training, both in the return to a recognisable research-based methodology, and in discussion of community planning which it contains. Gillian Banks continues in this latter area by outlining the role of the interpreter as 'animateur,' putting heritage on the local agenda, and working with the community to realise its history. Her notes for training are encouraging, though receive no particular emphasis in Lord and Barrow's account of interpretive training issues. This is a pragmatic, C.E.I. based, assessment with a suggested syllabus which would still stump some practitioners who lay claim to interpretation. In contrast, William Lewis's note on 'self-discovery of principles of interpretation' harks back to the humanistic psychology of Carl Rogers. It may work in the hippie redoubt of Vermont, but would be difficult to apply in the previous paper's syllabus. Wagoner's paper on 'Romantic Interpretation' and training is in a similar mould, and brief contributions by John Brooks, James Carter, and Jan Dungey, all speak in a language which is passing out of use in British interpretive training and practise.

But many of the key issues with regard to interpretive training fail to find a place here. At what level should training take place? What are the most appropriate contributory disciplines? Should interpretive theory be an element in history, geography or tourism undergraduate courses? Where are the texts, the resources, the job opportunities

and the career paths? Root disciplines with long professional histories have the ability to recapture the initiative in new subject areas and there are already dangerous gaps between interpretive theory, training and practice.

THE VISITOR EXPERIENCE

Volume 2 highlights the 'visitor experience'; the first seven papers are on funding and marketing, the next eight focus on visitor services, whilst the remainder detail more specific aspects of interpretive evaluation. The interpretive focus as sustained in Vol. 1, becomes more ragged here, speakers tugging the interpretive rag this way and that, at times distorting and trivialising the interpretive task, especially when, as Uzzell notes in his introduction, we have surprisingly little evidence as to the effectiveness of interpretation in changing attitudes and behaviour. Far too much of this volume seems concerned with a 'pleasing for profit' view of the visitor.

Neil Cossons is an appropriate opener for the volume, outlining the changing circumstance of museums but with only passing reference to interpretation.

Stuart Smith, Director at Ironbridge is more forthright with regard to funding opportunities and retailing, introducing a symbol which might well head the table at a fuller debate on the subject:

'... our own Ironbridge teddy bear complete with our own label and, of course, our own silk bow tie with Ironbridge motif.'

No bears in the forest for Richard Broadhurst of the Forestry Commission, rather a systematic survey of funding options. That each option now requires sophisticated professional expertise is evidenced by Marc Mallam's hard-headed notes on the role of charitable trusts in heritage management though he is ill-served by a p 48 typo which attributes the out-of-character observation that 'Heritage sites are not (sic) increasingly dependent on the tourist industry for the provision of revenue support'.

Terry Robinson of the Countryside Commission begins to steer back to interpretation with reflections on a 1981 (still unpublished in 1989) study of visitor centre performance - useful hints and warnings here, especially with regard to the mismatch between designer/manager intentions and user needs. The consultant/client team of Antony Eastaugh and Nicholas Weiss provide a brief comment on English Heritage's market initiatives, with reference to Audley End in Essex.

Raymond Tabata's note on 'Special Interest Tourism' brought the image of Hawaii to the conference and the author to present it. Unfortunately it is a rather too general, tourism-oriented, account which hints at interpretive issues and initiatives which are not explained further.

This first set of papers could be justified as background to the interpretive task or,

more critically, they might suggest either a misunderstanding of interpretation or an attempt by interpreters to embrace and subsume museum and tourism professionals. The authors here fail to detail specific implications of increased market-orientation for interpretation.

There is hope in Michael Watson's discussion of the current role of interpretation in the US National Park Service, although recent field experience leaves me wondering as to how Washington-based this account is, with a noticeable decline in standards experienced at some New England sites. Jenny Feick's outline of new visitor-oriented presentation in Canadian National Parks is more fundamental, and free from the Tilden tradition.

Martin Westwood's account of Warwick Castle gives the reader the first comprehensive account of an attraction by its Manager. Warwick is a successful attraction, managed with a keen commercial eye, but founded in authority and a professional knowledge of the resource. Westwood's paper outlines the resource/interpretation/visitor relationship far more effectively than do the several contributions which attempt 'guideline' analysis.

DIGGING DEEPER?

Three papers which do not fit together but which are somewhat liberating in thought. Terry Stevens manages to quote Tilden, Lindisfarne and Van Morrison in his attempt to recapture interpretation from 'designer-led' projects, but possibly only assists the 'market-led' brigade in so doing. Ian Parkin and friends provide a neat, tidy up your town and act, approach to urban visitor management which foresees 'the theming and interpretation of the total environment' whilst Alan Capelle et al climb the spatial scale by exploring North American efforts at regional interpretation. Inter-agency management problems in the USA have always provided fruitful ground for such speculation.

The final sequence of papers is largely research-based, exploring detailed issues that are related, in most cases, to interpretation. Thus Paul Risk (again from the sensitive culture of New England) examined what might be termed 'tuning into your visitors.' Harris Shettel provides a short history of museum evaluation though Roger Silverstone raises rather more interesting research questions in the same area.

Alan Machin hitches himself to 'the social helix' and from the Halifax context illustrates many of the points with regards to community learning outlined by Gillian Binks in Vol. 1. But community learning can so easily be manipulated ... even research can be manipulative as is evidenced by Paulette McManus' report on her 168 complete conversations recorded as visitors interacted with displays and each other at London's Natural History Museum. Her conclusion, that 'there is no doubt that it is desirable to employ a

continuum from loose to firm control when preparing communicative situations in the museum' will appeal to those who believe that bugging and eavesdropping are essential interpretive tools. Robert Wendling's research report on outdoor education in North Carolina provides some justification for Aldridge's earlier separation of interpretation and environmental education.

Clearly these latter papers will only interest specialist audiences - for the 'man as nature study' supporters there is Gail Vander Stoep's experience with time-lapse photography and visitor tagging and it is interesting to find that the University of Massachusetts Human Subjects Committee were persuaded to endorse this. Terry Russell tracked his Science and Teaching Centre subjects but also faced up to them in subsequent discussion. Jerzy Swiecinski provides the only museum focused paper where the fundamentals of interpretation rather than the characteristics of visitor behaviour are explored.

IN CONCLUSION

David Lowenthal, in his conference reflections, and David Uzzell, in his two introductions, draw together the few common strands and the many diverting issues raised by these papers. Though both take care to round the edges of their comments, there are warnings. Lowenthal reassures the cultural value of, and necessity for, heritage. Uzzell believes that unless attitudes and behaviour are changed there will be no heritage.

One conclusion to be drawn from this collection is that an increasing range of participants and speakers is drawn to such conferences (and into such a collection) for very different personal reasons. Aside from the paid ticket to travel or the professional puff, there are clearly those who see interpretation as an adjunct to the museum service, as a cultivated cover for marketing, as a means of behavioural modification, or as a growing form of mass entertainment.

Whilst all these meanings are now embraced in the widespread use of the term in public and private sector proposals for place enhancement, they must not be allowed to overwhelm the original purpose of interpretation, the additional realisation of meanings inherent in place.

As a punter for places I know my intentions to be volatile, steered by the media, ever searching for novelty and discrete time/place visits. Yes, I need good toilets, signs, feeding places and the rest, but these are part of the infrastructure of towns, shopping centres, resorts and sports venues as well as heritage attractions. It is not the central task of interpretation to ensure their design and provision, other more skilled designers and managers have been doing that for much longer. Meeting my immediate physical needs should not be the interpretive priority.

The central task is to so research and analyse the resources, meanings, associations, and values in a place that

both the visitor and the place benefit from their interaction.

At several points in these texts there is the implication that interpretation untempered by market demand and user needs could just be an elitist activity, perpetuating existing class differences in environmental knowledge and attitudes. This is certainly the case, but it is an illusion to believe that user needs or customer convenience will remove the need for elitist interpretation. The interpreter is trained and therefore set apart from the majority through the research-based activity pursued. As has been seen in architecture and planning, the 'community' designer is still expected to have specialist knowledge and skills which set him or her apart from the community. In this sense, to deny elitism associated with expertise is to be seen by the client and community as having no professional offering worth paying for. As with architecture and planning, the skill is not to promise more toilets and better knick-knacks, but rather to develop a language and method for sharing the professional task, (and this probably does not include eavesdropping on customers or tagging visitors).

These two books represent a major benchmark in interpretation and are essential reading. I can but hope that a third volume, possibly under the title 'Interpreting New Places outside Pay Boundaries' will not be long in appearing.

*Brian Goodey
Reader in Urban Design, Oxford Polytechnic
and Associate, First Interpreters Ltd.*

NORTH COAST DISCOVERY TRAILS An evaluation for Cornwall County Council by Heather Collings, B.A., Dip. Soc. Admin., Countryside Projects Organiser.

I imagine that most readers of Heritage Interpretation will have seen Cornwall through the eyes of the tourist. How refreshing then to read an evaluation of Cornwall County Council's North Coast Discovery Trails which were positively aimed at local people.

All too often well intentioned authorities organise programmes of guided walks, talks, open days, and "fun" events without clear objectives or monitoring. In this instance the County Council appointed a Countryside Events Organiser, Heather Collings, to its Planning Department for one year, with Manpower Services Commission funding.

Although the title of the report is simply North Coast Discovery Trails, this really does not do the project justice. Set in the widely differing environments of Tehidy Country Park (near Camborne); and an area including town, estuarine, and sand dune features (not owned by the County Council) near Hayle, a variety of activities was arranged. They varied from guided walks with specialist leaders, and "fun" events (the Bluebell Fun Run, and an autumn countryside skills day followed by a Hallowe'en bonfire event), to special interest activities such as badger watching,

a countryside photography workshop and competition, a winter seal watch (with the Cornwall Trust for Nature Conservation), a slide talk, minibus outing, and Easter "Spot the Bird" marathon.

This evaluation, in the form of a 28 page A4 size report charts the background, aims, planning, implementation and monitoring process during the year, with valuable conclusions and recommendations for future strategy and a detailed analysis of the questionnaire. The author's useful comments and opinions on events for people, including publicity, sponsorship, the involvement of (and delegation to) other organisations, future ideas and timetabling are presented honestly in a down-to-earth manner.

My only minor criticism concerns the costing of the programme which did not seem to be set out in any detail, although there were references to the one-off events which were found to be self financing, and to sponsorship opportunities. But perhaps we worry too much about precise costs in this day and age! And in any case they would not have been substantial. Clearly a good number of people enjoyed and learnt from these worthwhile activities.

Cornwall County Council and all concerned deserve credit for their initiative in setting up and running the programme, and for producing such a useful "warts and all" evaluation.

Andrew Greenwood

MAKING COMMUNITY ACTION WORK IN THE ENVIRONMENT. Losehill Hall.

This is a report of a conference of the same name whose participants were able to "reorientate the conference structure" towards setting priorities rather than having discussions with support agencies. It is a synthesis of the three days, and as such does not have an author.

This means that it is more a theoretical document than a handbook for those interested in getting involved in action. Moreover, it is not specifically geared to interpretation, though the points are general.

There is a description of the background to the conference. The main topic it deals with are the reasons for community action, and what its guiding principles are. Needs in working practices are dealt with under attitudes and structures and a third section headed "working practices".

The final chapter is an agenda for action that appears to consist of two sections, despite the statement that the agenda falls into four broad areas. The first is strategic action and includes recommendations on a framework for co-ordination, training, increased resources and exchange of ideas and good practice. The second is tactical action and includes recommendations about institutions and attitudes, skills and communication.

In design and writing style it is a difficult report to read, so if you are sceptical about community action it is not for you;

however, if you are already interested, there is much in its fourteen pages to encourage new ideas and thought.

Copies are £1.50 from Peter Townsend, Principal, Peak National Park Centre, Losehill Hall, Castleton, Derbyshire S30 2WB.

Ruth Tillyard

HRH THE PRINCE OF WALES. A VISION OF BRITAIN: A PERSONAL VIEW OF ARCHITECTURE Doubleday, 1989, £16.95

Already the reader will be aware of this most pleasant volume as a publishing event, an exhibition tie-in, the book of the TV film, provocation to a published rebuttal by the forward President of the R.I.B.A., and evidence of forthright involvement in the environment by the heir to the throne. Worth a glance, then, for any one of these reasons. The quality of book design alone is instructive.

But worth more than a glance, too, in that it is an honest attempt to explain and reveal... even interpret... the mysteries of the built environment as the user and consumer experience it. The text is clear, modestly opinionated, full of personal encounters that connect, and wrapped in a personal philosophy which finds many followers. Where the text weakens, well selected illustrations or the Prince's watercolours propel the arguments onward.

Although press discussion may have suggested that the author is turning to the past in the face of an unacceptable present, the many positive references to contemporary design show that this is not a simple polemic against 'modernism'.

Like many interpreters, the Prince has a deeply-felt belief in the importance of community participation in environment change, though this appears to be at a different scale from the major landscape structures which, when mystically appropriate, find 'their place comfortably in the landscape.'

To the non-designer this text provides capsule criticisms and effective illustrations of the series of contentious sites which have dominated popular attention - London's Mansion House Square, Birmingham's Bull Ring, Docklands etc. Positive solutions and alternative schemes are thinner on the ground and some features draw on the work of overseas designers.

Central to the argument and the book is the statement of 'Ten Principles' (which were originally 'Commandments' but such statements from a member of the Royal Family were judged inappropriate!).

These principles are significant, if only because they are key concepts in the process of architecture and urban design which are seldom presented in a manner which permits general understanding and use. The 'principles' are it must be admitted, a mixed bag - The Place :

Hierarchy : Scale : Harmony : Enclosure : Materials : Decoration : Art "Signs and Lights : Community - but the presentation of each on a double spread shows how such concepts can be communicated.

One of the surprises is a brief discussion of the contemporary Florida town, Seaside, which is being developed according to a strict design code rooted in the traditions of the American small town. The code employed may be viewed as a set of interpretive guidelines to ensure that each individually-designed home enhances a new, but well-rooted, sense of place. Many of the Seaside ideas, in part developed by Leon Krier who has proposed the Prince's expansion of Dorchester, have been further developed in Swansea's Maritime Quarter. Aside from derivative Seaside gazebos, Swansea has gone much further in inserting interpretive art, sculpture and information into its new development. Recognising the creative and future-oriented role of interpretation, the city has entered the Gateway Awards scheme this year.

Any writer who manages to raise architectural and urban debate above the level of professional in-fighting and back-scratching deserves recognition. When he is a member of the Royal family following a tradition established by Prince Albert (and in the rural environment, by his own father) we should be grateful that such influence has been brought to bear on a subject where the interpretive profession has a less than adequate record.

Brian Goodey.

IN THE NEWS

NEW MUSEUM MAGAZINE WITH FOCUS ON GENERATING INCOME

The main problem facing Britain's 2,500 museums and galleries is finance - especially how to tap new sources of income to meet their new needs and the public's increased expectations.

Museum Development, a new magazine launched in October, aims to help museums and galleries face this challenge with confidence. It will focus on the wide variety of ways in which museums and galleries can generate more income: these include catering, travel programmes, publishing, membership programmes, property development, corporate hospitality and licensing, as well as grants and sponsorship.

Launching Museum Development, Graeme Farnell, the magazine's publisher, said, "Museum Development is much more than another magazine. It's a reference source for all those museums and galleries who need to generate more income. With regular analysis, news updates, exclusive surveys and in-depth case studies it's packed with the new ideas and successful experience that all kinds and sizes of museums needs in today's increasingly competitive funding environment."

Museum Development magazine is published by The Museum Development Company. Graeme Farnell, who set up the company, has over 15 years experience of museums, latterly as Director General of the Museums Association.

Museum Development is published monthly and is only available on subscription.

MORE INFORMATION

Contact Graeme Farnell on 0908 - 660629

NEW NATIONAL FORESTRY CENTRE

First Interpreters have been given the go-ahead by the Forestry Commission to carry out a feasibility study for a national Forestry Visitor Centre. This new visitor attraction will be located in the Dumfries and Galloway region aiming to tell the stories of the forestry industry in Scotland.

The first part of the study will be completed over the next eight weeks and will consider the role and function of the Centre and its most appropriate location. The team will be looking at sites in Galloway Forest Park, Loch Ken, Mabie Forest, Gatehouse of Fleet, Dalbeattie, Forest of Ae and Eskdalemuir. Particular attention will be paid to the anticipated cost of the centre, visitor numbers and sources of money to build and operate it.

Based on this information the Forestry Commission will then decide whether to proceed with the second stage of the study which will include the design of the building, research into the theme and stories leading to initial design of the interpretive provision and detailed financial projections.

The study team which includes the Economic Forestry Group and London Building Design will be aiming to establish a clear concept and a strong image to provide visitors with a stimulating and memorable experience. Over the next few weeks the project team will be talking to a number of people involved in local authorities, the tourist and forestry industries and also taking into account the views of local people.

INTERPRETIVE SCHEMES WIN TOURISM AWARDS

Two farms featured in the Spring issue of the journal were amongst the winners of the first ever 'Best of Tourism Awards' from the East Midlands Tourist Board.

Tim Clark's White Post Modern Farm Centre between Nottingham and Newark received a commendation in the Visitor Attraction Development category.

Stoughton Farm Park, whose development and launch was masterminded by Bill Breakell, was the outright winner of the Marketing Award for Visitor Attractions.

Amongst the other award winners were Nottingham's Tales of Robin Hood and Lincolnshire's Recreational Walks Project.

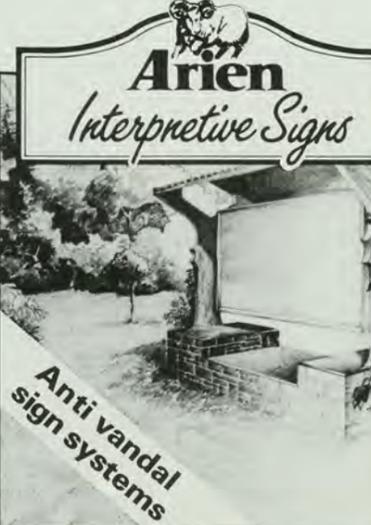
In addition to achieving recognition as winners of the Shires of Middle England Best of Tourist Awards, the winners are automatically being sent forward to the English Tourist Board for consideration in their England for Excellence Awards.

ROSE THEATRE: THE LONG TERM FUTURE

In October a symposium of experts explored various options for long-term conservation of the Rose Theatre remains. In the course of this discussion, the group decided that the preferred solution would be to encase the site, exactly as it was found, in an hermetically sealed, transparent enclosure which would allow for public viewing. The enclosure would maintain stable atmosphere conditions and moisture levels, essential to prevent decay of the remains. English Heritage has agreed to prepare a costed feasibility study for this project and will make the document public when completed.

DIARY

- **December 13th** - "Underground Manchester" and Granada Studios Tour. Contact Gill Binks 061 228 6171
- **January** - Gateway Awards. See over.
- **February 3rd** - Funding and Sponsorship for Heritage. St. Mary's College, Twickenham. Contact David Uzzell 0483 -571281
- **February** - (Date to be announced) Anglo-French Perspectives on Interpretation. Portsmouth and Caen.
- **APRIL 20th - 22nd** - The Society's Spring Conference in Durham. Impressions of the North-East - Interpreting the Regional Culture.



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HERITAGE & TOURISM. ICOMOS EUROPEAN CONFERENCE. Canterbury - University of Kent 27th - 30th March 1990.

Sponsored by The Baring Foundation, The Tussauds Group, The J Paul Getty Jnr. Charitable Trust and Sea Containers Ltd.

The Conference has two objectives - firstly to examine how tourism involving heritage buildings and sites can be enhanced and developed, and secondly to review all possible means to improve the presentation of the heritage and also to protect it from damage resulting from visitor numbers.

The UK Committee of International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS UK) has convened this conference in 1990 as a contribution to the EEC's European Year of Tourism.

The Conference will be based at the University of Kent. It will consist of plenary sessions, seminars and discussion groups with speakers from a number of European countries. In addition, visits will be made to heritage buildings and sites in the locality.

SUBJECTS TO BE COVERED WILL INCLUDE:

The European Dimensions of Tourism. Pressures on the Heritage - Cathedrals, Castles, Historic Houses and Open Sites. Cultural Tourism - Management, Presentation and Marketing - striking the right balance.

VISITS

These will include the Cathedral and the historic City of Canterbury, Dover and Richborough Castles, both in the care of English Heritage.

BOOKING

Residential places on the Conference are limited, and early reservations are thus essential to avoid disappointment. The full residential fee is £300 per person, if paid before 15th January 1990. (£325 after that date). Fees include University accommodation, full board, visits, receptions and coaches.

CONTACT:-

ICOMOS UK, 10 Barley Mow Passage, London W4 4PH, U.K.
Tel: 01 - 994 6477.
Telex: 8811418.

The Society for the Interpretation of Britain's Heritage

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;
* to 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 £15.00, Library

£9.00, Corporate £40.00,
Student £8.00, Overseas £16.00
(£20 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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Society for the Interpretation of Britain's Heritage INTERPRETATION, CULTURE AND THE ARTS 18th -19th January 1990

1989 GATEWAY INTERPRET BRITAIN AWARDS PRESENTATIONS AND CONFERENCE

The Gateway Awards Presentations for this year's winners will take place in Glasgow at 12 noon on Thursday 18th January, 1990 provisionally at the splendid Victorian City Chambers.

Glasgow is the Cultural Capital of Europe in 1990, and has organised a year long festival of the arts. With this in mind, the Awards Ceremony will be followed by a two-day conference which will explore "how the arts can be used to interpret natural and historical heritage, and ways in which the arts can be made more accessible and meaningful by interpretation."

The conference will begin at 2.30p.m. on the 18th, with a keynote speech. Other conference sessions will have exponents of the various art forms coupled with a variety of interpretative practitioners speaking and leading discussions, for example:

Sculpture and Forestry
Musical Story-telling and Historical Buildings
Theatre and Environmental Education
Paintings and Museums
Poetry in the Countryside

There will also be practical 'performances'.

The conference will disperse at 4.30p.m. on the 19th.

Accommodation will be at a city centre hotel, and arrangements will be made for those arriving at Central Station by overnight sleeper.

The cost will be £55 to £60, including Thursday dinner, live entertainment, twin-bedded accommodation (single available), Friday breakfast, lunch, teas/coffees, etc.

Glasgow celebrations for 1990 will have already started and special rates will be available for those wishing to make a long weekend of it.

Further information is available from:

Ruth Tillyard,
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Tel: (0360) 20401