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HERITAGE INTERPRETATION

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Issue No 44 focuses on interpretation in France.

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INTERPRETING THE BATTLEFIELDS OF NORTHERN FRANCE

TONIE AND VALMAI HOLT

Major & Mrs Holt's Battlefield Tours.

Our battlefield tours, which now cover historic sites as diverse as Agincourt, Gettysburg, Waterloo, Caporetto, El Alamein, Vietnam and the Falkland Islands started by accident.

A book, called "Till the Boys Come Home", which we wrote on the First World War and illustrated from our extensive postcard collection was taken as main choice by what was then Purnell's Military Book Club.

During a meeting with the Managing Director of Purnell, the idea of an experimental 'Battlefield Tour' was born. The mail-out to the Book Club members describing the tour had an overwhelming response. It was an exciting challenge. At that stage we had no experience in travel, but this was compensated for by an enormous enthusiasm for the project.

From the very beginning we strongly believed that visitors to battlefields and students of Military Campaigns stood no chance of understanding those battles unless they looked at them through the eyes, and with the mentality, of those who took part in them.

How to achieve that aim? In many cases we would be travelling across land which farmers had been determined to restore to productive fields as quickly as possible, and to eliminate all traces of the horror and debris of war.

Thankfully for the student, areas of scarred battlefields have been preserved as a reminder of the devastation of war. The 'petrified' World War 1 trenches of Vimy Ridge for instance, and the tunnels dug in the hard chalk beneath them (which the Canadians used to bring up their men to the start line sheltered from hostile fire and to tend their wounded in safety) are ideal sites for showing the visitor the practicalities and awfulness of trench life.

Duck boards, fire steps, the parados and parapet, the zig zag shape of the trenches (to prevent one tossed grenade killing a whole line of men), all still exist, coated in concrete. Their use and necessity can be vividly demonstrated to a group actually standing in, and walking through the trench lines. Artefacts like '14 - '18 trench periscopes are passed amongst the group, who try their efficacy for themselves. The nearness of the Allied front line to the German front line at this point brings out the strain of living so close to one's enemy. It is easy to imagine the exchange of insults and banter as well as rifle fire that must have taken place.

Perhaps even more evocative are the undulating, meandering trench lines and shell holes at the Newfoundland Memorial Park at Beaumont Hamel, where nature has been allowed to grass over and gentle the harsh gashes in the land. Here 91% of the men of the Newfoundland Regiment, a very high proportion of the young males of this sparsely populated community of Newfoundland - then quite separate from Canada - were killed and wounded out of the 752 who advanced from their start line on 1 July 1916. "Dead men can advance no further", responded their Commanding Officer when asked why he did not pursue the attack.

Their memory lingers strongly. It is here, having prepared the group with the facts of the tragic attack, that we sometimes play, on a tape recorder, the sounds of battle - that hideous, often forgotten, dimension of war. The crump of shells, the rat-tat-tat of machine guns, the crack of rifle shots - the cacophony was unbearable for many who took part and was probably as responsible for "shellshock" as any other factor.

Here, we come on July 1, when the memories are so strong they are almost tangible, with groups who understand and are sensitive to the experiences of those men of '14 - '18. We make our way in the early morning dark, in a spirit of homage to their sacrifice, to the great natural defensive gully called Y ravine, held by the Germans. There is a natural feeling of apprehension of the unknown. We move without speaking, by sparing use of torchlight, to our assigned places in the trench line, briefed to stand quietly and await the whistle which will signal "Over the top". Then we issue, as they

On Hill 60 near Ypres.

did before most major '14 - '18 attacks, a tot of rum. We ask the group, especially those who do not normally drink spirits, to examine the effect - the comforting warmth as it burns down the throat to the chest, the feeling of confidence, of Dutch Courage, it gives. Then, as the whistle blows and we scramble up the steep slope, the effect suddenly evaporates. Each member of the group then makes his or her way, in the dawn light, across the pitted battlefield to an assigned rendezvous. Some simply sit in a shell hole and soak in the atmosphere that lingers there. Others visit the small war cemeteries (there are 3) in the park and quietly pay their respect to the lines of young men whose date of death reads "1 July 1916".

When we meet again no-one remains unaware of what it might have been like to have taken part in the fearsome attack. It is a voluntary exercise in identifying with the men of '14 - '18 - true empathy.

Sometimes, with the use of detailed trench maps (and the farmer's permission) we walk the path of the advance of a chosen battalion. As we walk we discuss the conditions that existed at the time of the attack - what shelter was there, where would the enemy machine guns have been sited, how far did they progress? Personal accounts from letters home, diaries and Regimental Histories are read at pertinent points. Poems written by men who took part in, or were affected by, the action are recited, veteran's memories are played. In Mametz Wood where Welshmen of the 38th Division were decimated on 8-10 July 1916, we play the hymn they sang going into battle "Jesu Lover of My Soul".

Military Museums on or near the site of battlefields can provide some marvellous aids to interpreting the battles. Museums in the area of the French sector at Verdun include audio-visual presentations which show actions on sites the group is shortly to visit. Dioramas depict the churned up mud, littered with the debris of war, contemporary photographs show the haggard faces of the men who populated it. These images can be super-imposed on the battlefield when we walk it. Personal possessions (a soldier's pipe or watch), packages of the period (cigarettes, bandages, etc) all help to recreate the mood of the bygone era.

On our very first tour we instituted the process of asking our travellers to exercise their imagination to co-operate in a time travel process that would help them to eliminate the images of the 1970's, '80's and now '90's. To assist them in this process we make much use of music, a most evocative medium. 'It's a Long Way to Tipperary', 'Roses of Picardy', 'Take me Back to Dear Old Blighty' and other popular songs capture the spirits of the men marching to war. From time to time we superimpose the sound of marching feet as the coach bumps over cobbles, little changed since '14 - '18.

Journey time is also spent in listening to presentations by the well-trained historian guide to set the scene before we arrive at the actual battlefield. These will include recordings of personal memories, extracts from memoirs, letters and poems.

To complete the 'visual' part of our audio-visual mobile theatre production, we pass around contemporary literature. This includes newspapers, with their censored accounts of the battle, cartoons and diaries with a more realistic version; magazines (such as "Twenty Years After", produced after the Great War and written by those who took part). Postcards are invaluable miniature historical documents. On one side they portray the leaders and the men who fought, examples of current humour and catch phrases ("Are we down-hearted?" for example), tanks, aeroplanes, armoured cars, aspects of patriotism and propaganda. On the other side are the personal messages which vividly evoke the attitudes of the period. Often they show the towns and villages we are visiting, destroyed by the war.

More and more we now use short video extracts from contemporary film. All these techniques - carefully prepared, preparatory lectures by well-informed historians, use of veterans' memories, leaders' memoirs, popular songs, 'hands on' use of artefacts and tangible objects (like tins of World War II dried egg, gas masks etc), video when appropriate, walking through remaining earthworks, dugouts etc., are adapted and used to interpret all periods of Military history - where they are available. For instance, when studying the Normandy D-Day Landing Beaches, the Home Front is not neglected.

The sounds of air raid warnings, of bombing attacks, of evacuees' plaintive memories are played. Presentations include extracts from famous War Correspondents' accounts; the voice of Major John Howard, who led the spectacular glider attack to capture Pegasus Bridge; the sounds of the bagpipes of Lord Lovat's Piper, Bill Millin, as he landed on SWORD Beach. We scramble through the great German bunkers at Pointe du Hoc, look up with awe from the deceptively beautiful golden sands of OMAHA Beach at the cliffs which on 6 June bristled with German machine guns.

All combine to make our unique "Time Capsule" concept of using our coach as a time machine to aid our travellers to regress wholeheartedly to the period under study. Its success can be measured by the number of very frequent travellers who return, year after year, to experience it and by the way in which on every trip we share laughter - and tears.

Bunker in Flanders.

FRENCH INTERPRETATION IN ACTION

ROBERT FENART

Parc Naturel Régional Nord-Pas de Calais

ESPACE NATUREL REGIONAL is an organisation forming part of the Regional Council of Nord-Pas de Calais. Its activities cover economic and social development, the protection and care of the natural and cultural heritage and awareness, education and information about the environmental domain in its widest sense.

A few months ago a new word appeared in our vocabulary: interpretation. If anyone asked us what we understand by the word 'interpretation' we would, perhaps, be unable to answer. A two month visit last summer by a Canadian specialising in this field (which incidentally, originates from the English-speaking world) was the catalyst for a series of dicussions led by ENR. One point to remember at the outset is that we had been practising interpretation all along without realising it. In the following three examples we will try to show how we have understood the interpretation of nature.

At Condette, near Hardelot, on the coast of the Pas de Calais there is a chateau. A 13th century medieval precinct stands side by side with a romantic in the Neogothic style, residence built in 1848 by E.N.R. has been responsible for their upkeep for 40 years.

During the summer of 1988 a special event was undertaken: combining the creation of a discovery trail based on a medieval tavern, with a "son et lumiere" spectacle retracing the legend of Tristan and Isolde. It's success was such that the historic vocation of the site seemed to be beyond doubt.

From now on our objective is to do something similar in the large mediaeval centre to the north of Paris. A commercial company will take on all production matters. As specialists in the production of medieval spectacles they will, over a period of time, put on productions and events which take full advantage of the potential of the site.

Thus E.N.R. and a private company are developing under a partnership agreement. For our part we allow this company to work under an excellent management regime at the castle whilst we take on visitor care, contact with the media and general management. For their part, the company is adjusting its operations to the special conditions of the site and is enchancing the chateau by giving it new life.

The second example brings into play the approach to environmental education which we have been following for several years. One facet of this approach is to invite primary school children to experience a day of adventure through the most beautiful areas of the Nord-Pas de Calais.

These educational journeys, whose objective is the discovery and heightened awareness of natural places, often rely on an approach through the emotions.

Awakening the senses and satisfying the curiousity of the child are the underlying principles of this operation which goes by the name of "Objectif-Nature".

The fundamental idea is summed-up by the well-known Chinese proverb: "I listen and I forget. I see and I understand. I do and I remember". This means of raising awareness creates and activates a feeling of well being towards nature, so that it is respected.

This year at least 15,000 elementary school children will participate in these environmental education sessions. This will be thanks to co-operation between Education Nationale and E.N.R., with sponsorship from the national savings bank.

We also operate other forms of partnership: for instance with volunteer groups based at the various visitor centres around the region (marsh, forest, coast and heathland). The 30 nature guides of these voluntary associations are given free training by E.N.R. with the help of external grants.

Our new training course, undertaken over twelve days between November 1989 and March 1990, sought to establish a balance between personal motivation, the truths which the sites reveal and the best means of communicating these features to children. Practical exercises are alternated with discussions on ecology, on educational theory and outdoor workshops covering the techniques of animation and communication.

Pageant at Condette.

Each guide is trained to be capable of drawing-up a description of his/her site and an action plan covering themes, objectives and how to evaluate the success of the project.

Our training programme turns nature into an adventure, and life into a story, where each element has its own place. The guides can then teach children to absorb the spirit of a place where dreams and reality are mingled, so that they appreciate their own place in the scheme of things and when they become adults they won't forget.

The third example follows logically on from those above. On the eve of momentous times for Europe we think it opportune to organise a special event at which the children of Europe, and the environment, will be given pride of place.

A European festival of environmental education is planned for 13-16 June 1990 at Amaury near Valenciennes - a town 50km south of Lille - again with our financial partner, the national savings bank. It will allow the children of the European community to meet each other as well as learning about their own local environment.

At this festival a general concours under the banner "The Schoolchildren of Europe act out with Nature", will allow school groups to participate actively. Amongst them an English group will make a presentation celebrating one or more aspects of the environment in their country. In order to get across to the many nationalities in the audience, the groups will favour means of expression other than language - such as mime, dance, singing, comedy, light displays and so on.

A number of artists will be attending the festival to work alongside the best environmental professionals from the whole of Europe - all of them aiming to enliven the nature discovery sessions, the workshops and to contribute to a plenary session on environmental education which aims to institute a European Grant for educational purposes.

Four hundred children aged from 8 to 11 will make their presentations to an audience comprising an international jury, 3,000 children from the Nord-Pas de Calais region and numerous media people keen to hear the views of those who will be 20 years old in the year 2000.

These three examples demonstrate very well the existence of a global policy which aspires to acquire important sites and so respond to public demands stemming from a longing for nature. The objectives of this policy are fixed at regional level with direction coming from a strongly motivated team who consider that planning is vital. E.N.R. has drawn up a regional manual for planning interpretation which the Environment Ministry has, nevertheless, distributed nationwide.

This manual allows interpretive methods to be applied to any site whatsoever.By this means we aim to arouse the public's interest in the natural and cultural heritage of their own region. By directly involving each individual we make them aware of the meaning and value of their heritage and of its temporal and spatial postion in the wider environment. The manual sets-out for them the various organisations involved with natural areas in the Nord-Pas de Calais region, the fundementals of interpretation, the interpretive plan, how to prepare an interpretation programme, together with practical and operational information.

A collection of technical papers and training sessions concerning the management and interpretation of the natural heritage are in the course of further elaboration and our associates, whether independent or in partnership with us, in France or elsewhere in Europe, are committed to work together and to continue to put into effect a determination to further evolve our environmental approach.

THE OTHER 'TRANS-MANCHE LINK': Contrasting Interpretive Experiences in France

DAVID UZZELL

Department of Psychology, University of Surrey, Guildford.

Later this year it is the intention of the Society to organise a joint Anglo-French meeting at which we will look at two interpretive sites, one on each side of the English Channel. Each site, however, deals with a common theme, the Allied landings in the Second World War. The proposal is to invite a group of French interpreters to Britain to meet SIBH members and to visit the D-Day Musuem at Southsea, then travel to Caen in Normandy to look at how the subject has been treated there. We may even have the opportunity to discuss the opportunities for shipboard interpretation as we cross the Channel. This will provide an exciting occasion, not only to contrast two approaches to one particular subject, but to talk to French interpreters and exchange with them current ideas and practice in France and Britain.

We were hoping to arrange this joint meeting in the Spring, but this has proved not to be possible, to the slight irritation of the editor who has given this edition of the journal a French focus. By way of penance, I agreed to write a brief article about interpretation in France. What I am about to describe is not necessarily the best interpretation in France or even the most well known, but a range of places or sites which have impressed me for a variety of reasons.

Although it is probably fair to conclude that there is not as much site interpretation in France as there is in Britain, this does not mean a lack of variety, approaches or subjects covered. Good examples are to be found in the *routes de vin,* the interpretation of battlefield and war sites in Normandy, Northern France and at individual locations such as Oradour-sur-Glane (discussed in detail in Chapter 4, Heritage Interpretation: Volume I, (ed) D. L. Uzzell, Belhaven Press, 1989), the visitor centres to be found in the Regional and National Parks of Brittany and the Pyrenees, and of course the museums and art galleries of Paris and the other major French cities.

There are, however, a number of interesting and significant differences between attitudes to the visitor in France, and the role of interpretation in visitor management and education. One clear example of this can be found in the French attitude to visitors and visitor safety which is very different to what we normally find in this country. Indeed, when has there ever been an article in the pages of this Journal which discusses interpretation and safety?

Risk and Danger

By way of illustration let me cite one of my first experiences of interpretation in France at La Madeleine in the Dordogne near the more famous caves of Les Eyzies. This is an intriguing cliff site on the banks of the River Vézère. Within a vertical height of about 150 feet, three periods of human occupance are in evidence. At the base of the cliff, wave-cut caves provided shelter for late Palaeolithic man. In the face of the cliff itself are man-made caves which were cut by troglodytic inhabitants in the 18th and 19th centuries. On the top of the cliff are the remains of a derelict chateau, long since abandoned. A local speleologist discovered the troglodytic caves some years ago while glancing up at the cliffs from the fields opposite. This was more of an achievement than one would imagine because the cliffs were covered in a dense curtain of vegetation. He climbed down the ropes and hacked his way through the vegetation and in time found a number of man-made caves. For a number of years, certainly up until the late 1970's he combined his archaeological and climbing skills to research them. When I met him in 1977, he told me that he had received little help from the archaeological establishment who somewhat resented his amateur status. However, single-handedly, he had gone on to raise funds to construct a small building on site with an exhibition documenting the finds. On a brief return to the site a year or two ago we found a more substantial visitor centre had been built.

My most lasting impression of the project is being asked whether I would like to visit the caves. This involved climbing down the face of the cliff on a home-made ladder, walking along a plank of wood about 9 inches wide, lashed to the side of the cliff and then climbing through one of the 'windows' into the troglodytic cave. Our guide enthused about the place, the people and his work. We then climbed out through one of the windows again and made the return journey. Issues of safety and liability were never raised, the assumption being that we were responsible for our own actions. This was my first experience of French interpretation, and it was memorable, not only for the enthusiasm and spontaneity of a gifted amateur interpreter, but also the opportunity to provide an experience irrespective of concerns about safety and risk.

Far from being an isolated occurrence it would seem to be a more prevalent view in France that visitors visit at their own risk. On another occasion, for example, I visited the great Roman aqueduct at the Pont du Gard in Provence which carried water over the River Gardon, 160 feet below. It was built in 18-19 BC as one of the principal sources of water supply to Nimes. Although the aqueduct is complete inasmuch as it traverses the gorge, its superstructure is not totally whole. Water was carried by means of a covered channel, the U-shaped channel

being capped, as I recall, by large stones held in position by the uprights of about two wide feet. Here the visitor can choose either to walk in the channel or along the supports. Some visitors choose to sit on the supports dangling their feet over the edge of the aqueduct. Negotiating them is nothing short of heart-stopping as a mis-step would have serious consequences. Even on the lower decks of the Pont du Gard, there are no railings or barriers of any sort. If you go over the edge, *c'est la vie* or not as the case may be.

The French attitude to visitors is sometimes mirrored in the attitudes to place. Even sites of international significance, such as the Standing Stones at Carnac, are badly eroded. There seems to be little outward signs of either site or visitor management with a result that the grass between the stones was, when I was there in 1982, totally bare. Furthermore, the stones were regarded by many visitors as novel climbing apparatus and perches on which to sit, stand, dance and to have photographs taken. English Heritage would have been apoplectic (as they seem to be getting paranoid about anyone breathing within fifty yards of Stonehenge). Of course, what was sad about Carnac, was not simply the state of the environment, but the lack of any clear or memorable interpretation. This was an obvious missed opportunity, not only because unless visitors carried the almost obligatory Michelin Guide Vert, they would leave the site little the wiser, but also because interpretation could have been used as an effective tool for visitor management.

It is an impression, and only an impression, that the French look more to guidebooks for their interpretation. Michelin Guides now have an international reputation, so that they are not only translated into other languages, but are readily available for non-francophone places such as London, Scotland and New York. This is probably because they are so well designed and written. A competitor for the reader's attention are the Hachette World Guides, usually known in France as Guide Bleu, and beautifully sent up in Roland Barthes' essay 'The *Blue Guide*' (in Mythologies, Paladin, 1973). The cynic might suggest that the preference for imbibing tourist information in a written form should prepare the French visitor well for our visitor centres.

Social Spaces and Social Places

We all know that the disease of 'Visitorcentritis' swept through Britain in the 1970's, in a not dissimilar way to Mad Cow Disease now. Visitor centres were seen by many as the all-purpose interpretive solution. In France, while interpretive centres exist, they are not the ubiquitous feature they are in this country. The decision to build the Centre d'Information de Gines in the Parc Naturel Régional de Camargue was, however, exactly the right one. But the noteworthy feature of the visitor centre is not its location, or its splendid views across an extensive lagoon through large picture windows, but its internal design and

Style in the Camargue

Your friendly guide.

Welcome to Chenonceaux

On the Pont du Gard *(All photos by David Uzzell.)*

interpretive emphasis. On entering, one is immediately confronted with the feeling of lightness, spaciousness and a restful relief to the harsh Mediterranean light, reinforced by the white walls and stone-tiled floor.

There is a small permanent exhibition about the history, extent and ecology of the Carmargue. This takes up a comparatively small amount of floor space. When I was there, there was a more extensive temorary exhibition on the use of the Camargue as a film set. But the most exciting design feature of the Centre d'Information at Gines is that the architects have recognised what research has shown, and what interpreters have undoubtebly known that the majority of visitors - usually well over 90% - arrive as members of the family or friendship groups.

This should have implications for the provision of facilities such as mother/father and baby rooms (because it is on a recreation visit that one is more likely than any other time to find the family together and the need for such facilities), but it also has significant implications for interpretive provision.

Work undertaken by Linda Blud at Surrey has shown that social interaction can and does play a key role in visitor learning. How does this operate? When a visitor reads, say, an exhibition panel, he or she may not understand the concepts and therefore ask their friends/spouse/parent/child to explain. In the process of discussing, elaborating, finding familiar and meaningful examples, the individual learns - probably more than is conveyed in the text. Interpretation here is not an end in itself but a trigger to encourage explanation, elaboration and exploration of the ideas and information. Linda Blud's work has shown that while interactive exhibits (eg. pulling levers) increases learning, interpretation mediated by social interaction between visitors is even more effective.

The Centre at Gines provides the kind of environment to encourage social interaction. (See picture on page 6).

It recognises visitors will arrive as a group, will probably want to sit and rest at some point during their visit, will want to talk about what they have seen and not treat the visitor centre as a place of reverential silence. The seating area can also double up as a space for coach parties and school groups. Notice the hearth, traditionally the place for discussion. While this may have a functional value in the winter, it also has a symbolic value as it gives a public building a domestic feel and 'encourages' people to sit around the hearth and engage in conversation.

Style

Finally, style. Would you prefer to be greeted by the host (centre of photo) who can be found at the entrance to the chateau of Chenonceaux, a sixteenth century chateau on the Loire? Or would you rather come across the character at this British heritage site wearing the *haute couture* of Wormwood Scrubs? (Pictures on Page 6.)

I am sure British Interpreters have a great deal to offer French practice as we approach 1992. It is quite clear that we have to learn too. The joint Anglo-French meeting in the autumn will be an excellent opportunity to discover French interpretation at first hand.

PROTECTION OF THE FRENCH HERITAGE

NATALIE LEFEVRE

Currently studying at the Institute of Advanced Architectural Studies, York.

The French heritage, as with all European ones, is principally composed of antiquities, chateaux, manors, castles, religious monuments, museums etc.

We do not have any geneal survey but the analysis of listed monuments categories is:

Antiquities	1,768	15%
Chateaux	1,315	11%
Religious monuments	5,448	45%
Civic & public monuments	1,657	14%
Miscellaneous	1,794	15%
Total in France	11,982	

All these sites are managed by different owners. They are used for different purposes, such as residential, commercial use (principally hostels, golf clubs, offices), social, educational or administrative use and cultural use.

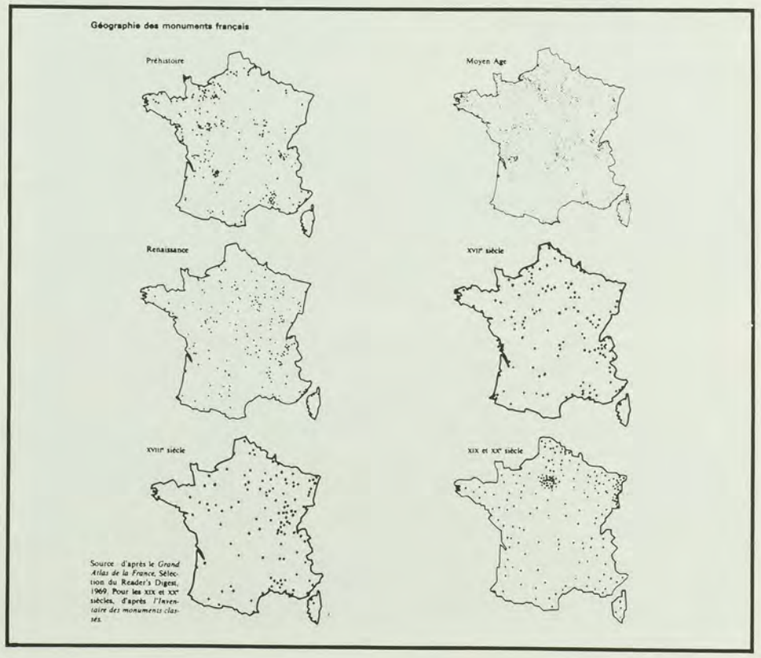
The French heritage in general is protected by a range of different organisations. Prominent amongst them are:-

(1). Les Vieilles Maisons Francaises,
93 avenue de l'Universite,
75005 Paris. Tel (1) 551. 78. 96

Founded 1958

President: Monsieur de Grandmaison

It is an association for private owners. It has 20,000 members of whom 6,000 are owners. They have 95 regional sub-groups.



Activities

- Conservation prize each year

- Promotion and publication of guide books

- Creation of an American Foundation, Friends of VMF

- Services MINITEL (Phone services)

- Exhibitions on books, restoration, etc.

- Publication of periodicals

(2) La Demeure Historique,
55 quai de la Tournelle,
75005 Paris. Tel: (1) 328. 02. 86

Founded 1924

This is a professional association for historic monument owners (2,000 members and friends of the DH).

Activities

- Helping with the protection of monuments and advising owners about "Classe Orinscrire" - registration of their estates

- Publication of a periodical

(3) Caisse Nationale des Monuments Historiques et des Sites,
62 rue Saint Antoine,
75004 Paris. Tèl (1) 274.22.22

A public body under the overall control of the Ministry of Culture and Communication.

Activities

- To receive and guide visitors at state-owned monuments and sites.

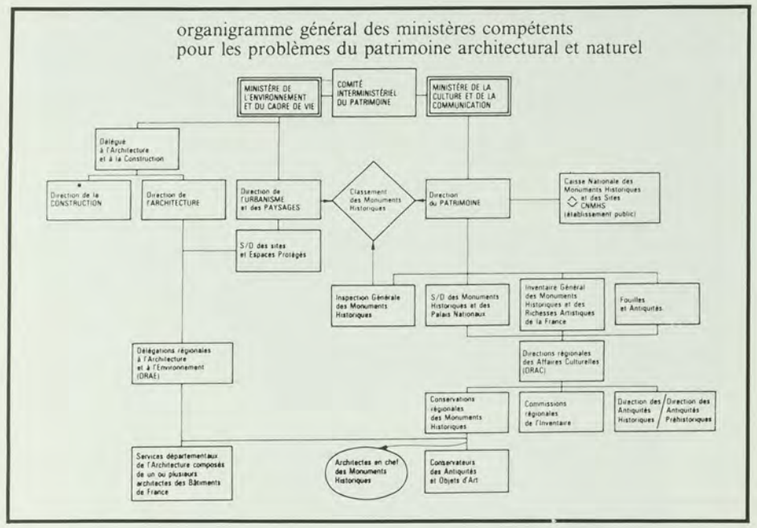
- Organizing publicity, the means of signing, management of information centres, guided tours, provision of tea rooms, restaurants and shops

- To inform the public about historical heritage through a central information service at the Hotel de Sully, by means of exhibitions, the publication of documents and periodicals and also by maintaining a central library

- Cultural activities

- Conservation of historical monuments by restoration; competitions and prizes; supporting voluntary work; management of sites such as abbeys, castles and museums

The presentation of a site to the public depends on its ownership and on financial resources as well as the categories of registration. Many of the French monuments stay private and unlisted; some are occasionally open to the public for special purposes. The other places used as public residences (hospitals, hostels etc.) allow a very limited public access and are insignificant in the wider picture.

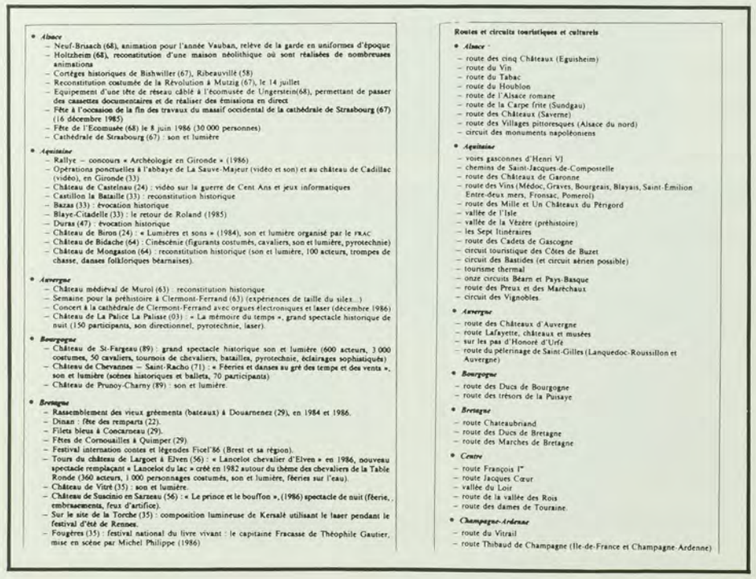


The listed monuments are usually open to the public except the sites used for administrative or religious purposes. In other cases it depends on the owner; if it is a private owner all access and presentation is organised by himself with guides and advice from the CNMHS, VMF and DH. If it is a national monument, its presentation will be handled by the state, CNMHS and the Ministry of Culture and Communication.

Public relations activity on the site is mostly done by the guide (Ecole de Louvre) and by the publication of books, leaflets and articles. Publicity relies on magazines, commercial articles and poster campaigns. Including our available monuments on maps and other means of communication is very well developed, and in each tourist town there is a tourism office to provide a first point of contact.

What is very important in France for our heritage is the relationship between the history and live theatre or shows, such as the Festival d'Avignon (theatre), les grandes eaux de Versailles ... (See listing below). The monuments are also used for different activities such as exhibitions, sporting activities, private functions (banquets, conferences, movies etc).

We still have a lot to learn about the management of sites for the public but we aim to keep a family atmosphere at each venue yet continue to develop its cultural aspect by artistic interpretation and special events.



• *Alsace*
– Neuf-Brisach (68), animation pour l'année Vauban, relève de la garde en uniformes d'époque
– Holtzheim (68), reconstitution d'une maison néolithique où sont réalisées de nombreuses animations
– Cortèges historiques de Bishwiller (67), Ribeauvillé (58)
– Reconstitution costumée de la Révolution à Mutzig (67), le 14 juillet
– Equipement d'une tête de réseau câblé à l'écomusée de Ungerstein(68), permettant de passer des cassettes documentaires et de réaliser des émissions en direct
– Fête à l'occasion de la fin des travaux du massif occidental de la cathédrale de Strasbourg (67) (16 décembre 1985)
– Fête de l'Ecomusée (68) le 8 juin 1986 (30 000 personnes).
– Cathédrale de Strasbourg (67) : son et lumière

• *Aquitaine*
– Rallye – concours « Archéologie en Gironde » (1986)
– Opérations ponctuelles à l'abbaye de La Sauve-Majeur (vidéo et son) et au château de Cadillac (vidéo), en Gironde (33)
– Château de Castelnau (24) : vidéo sur la guerre de Cent Ans et jeux informatiques
– Castillon la Bataille (33) : reconstitution historique
– Bazas (33) : évocation historique
– Blaye-Citadelle (33) : le retour de Roland (1985)
– Duras (47) : évocation historique
– Château de Biron (24) : « Lumières et sons » (1984), son et lumière organisé par le FRAC
– Château de Bidache (64) : Cinéscénie (figurants costumés, cavaliers, son et lumière, pyrotechnie)
– Château de Montgaston (64) : reconstitution historique (son et lumière, 100 acteurs, trompes de chasse, danses folkloriques béarnaises).

• *Auvergne*
– Château médiéval de Murol (63) : reconstitution historique
– Semaine pour la préhistoire à Clermont-Ferrand (63) (expériences de taille du silex...)
– Concert à la cathédrale de Clermont-Ferrand avec orgues électroniques et laser (décembre 1986)
– Château de La Palice La Palisse (03) : « La mémoire du temps », grand spectacle historique de nuit (150 participants, son directionnel, pyrotechnie, laser).

• *Bourgogne*
– Château de St-Fargeau (89) : grand spectacle historique son et lumière (600 acteurs, 3 000 costumes, 50 cavaliers, tournois de chevaliers, batailles, pyrotechnie, éclairages sophistiqués)
– Château de Chevannes – Saint-Racho (71) : « Féeries et danses au gré des temps et des vents », son et lumière (scènes historiques et ballets, 70 participants)
– Château de Prunoy-Charny (89) : son et lumière.

• *Bretagne*
– Rassemblement des vieux gréements (bateaux) à Douarnenez (29), en 1984 et 1986.
– Dinan : fête des remparts (22).
– Filets bleus à Concarneau (29).
– Fêtes de Cornouailles à Quimper (29).
– Festival international contes et légendes Ficel'86 (Brest et sa région).
– Tours du château de Largoet à Elven (56) : « Lancelot chevalier d'Elven » en 1986, nouveau spectacle remplaçant « Lancelot du lac » créé en 1982 autour du thème des chevaliers de la Table Ronde (360 acteurs, 1 000 personnages costumés, son et lumière, féeries sur l'eau).
– Château de Vitré (35) : son et lumière.
– Château de Suscinio en Sarzeau (56) : « Le prince et le bouffon », (1986) spectacle de nuit (féerie, embrasements, feux d'artifice).
– Sur le site de la Torche (35) : composition lumineuse de Kersalé utilisant le laser pendant le festival d'été de Rennes.
– Fougères (35) : festival national du livre vivant : le capitaine Fracasse de Théophile Gautier, mise en scène par Michel Philippe (1986)

Routes et circuits touristiques et culturels

• *Alsace* :
– route des cinq Châteaux (Eguisheim)
– route du Vin
– route du Tabac
– route du Houblon
– route de l'Alsace romane
– route de la Carpe frite (Sundgau)
– route des Châteaux (Saverne)
– route des Villages pittoresques (Alsace du nord)
– circuit des monuments napoléoniens

• *Aquitaine*
– voies gasconnes d'Henri V]
– chemins de Saint-Jacques-de-Compostelle
– route des Châteaux de Garonne
– route des Vins (Médoc, Graves, Bourgeais, Blayais, Saint-Émilion Entre-deux mers, Fronsac, Pomerol)
– route des Mille et Un Châteaux du Périgord
– vallée de l'Isle
– vallée de la Vézère (préhistoire)
– les Sept Itinéraires
– route des Cadets de Gascogne
– circuit touristique des Côtes de Buzet
– circuit des Bastides (et circuit aérien possible)
– tourisme thermal
– onze circuits Béarn et Pays-Basque
– route des Preux et des Maréchaux
– circuit des Vignobles.

• *Auvergne*
– route des Châteaux d'Auvergne
– route Lafayette, châteaux et musées
– sur les pas d'Honoré d'Urfé
– route du pèlerinage de Saint-Gilles (Lanquedoc-Roussillon et Auvergne)

• *Bourgogne*
– route des Ducs de Bourgogne
– route des trésors de la Puisaye

• *Bretagne*
– route Chateaubriand
– route des Ducs de Bretagne
– route des Marches de Bretagne

• *Centre*
– route François I^er^
– route Jacques Cœur
– vallée du Loir
– route de la vallée des Rois
– route des dames de Touraine.

• *Champagne-Ardenne*
– route du Vitrail
– route Thibaud de Champagne (Ile-de-France et Champagne-Ardenne)

GATEWAY INTERPRET BRITAIN AWARDS and VPB DESIGN AWARDS 1989

List of Prizewinners

Gateway Interpret Britain Award

Awards
Hartlepool Energy Information Centre,
Exeter Tourism Information Scheme
Shugborough Estate, Staffordshire
Lagan Valley Regional Park Events Programme, Belfast
Manchester Museum of Science and Industry
Countryside Playschemes, Lochore Meadows Country Park, Fife

Commendation
Summer Safari, Kirklees, Yorkshire.
Shugborough Mill, Staffordshire.
Apprentice House and Garden, Quarry Bank Mill, Styal, Cheshire.
Boscobel House, Shropshire.
East Dorset Heritage Trust.
Archaeology in the Community, Humberside.
Morpeth Chantry Bagpipe Museum.
Stepping out in Herts.
New Forest Museum and Visitor Centre.
Norfolk from the Air (book).
Lagan Valley Regional Park Information Booklet.

VPB Design Award
First
Exeter Tourist Information Scheme
Second
Housesteads Roman Fort, Northumbria
Third
Portsmouth Historic Dockyard
Commended
Carsington Reservoir, Derbyshire
Barbury Country Park, Wiltshire
Presenting Chester Initiative

The Stables at Shugborough Mill.

Portsmouth Historic Dockyard.

Hartlepool Energy Information Centre. *Photo: CEGB.*

BREATHING LIFE BEYOND THE GLASS

Gateway Awards Conference in Glasgow, 18-19th Jan. 1990

This year's Gateway Interpret Britain Awards and the VBH Design Awards were presented as part of the Society for the Interpretation of Britain's Heritage's conference on 'Interpretation, Culture and the Arts'. The venue, appropriately enough, was Glasgow - a city that has not only done much recently to interpret its great commercial, maritime and architectural heritage for the nation, but is also 'European Cultural Capital' for 1990.

The awards were presented by Magnus Magnusson. He had no "passes," or rather he passed on everything: supportiveness, urbanity and a real interest in the winners and their projects. In making a plea for the importance of being aware of our architectural environment, he said 'architecture is something waiting to lie down and become archaeology' and he expressed what he thought was the importance of what the Gateway awards were encouraging as the 'three p's', 'preservation, presentation and promotion'.

These three 'p's' were taken up in the Conference's keynote address, given by Julian Spalding, the new Director of Glasgow Museums and Art Galleries. His theme, and the theme of the Conference, was the way in which the arts and interpretation can enliven or 'breathe life' into the past, while at the same time avoiding the more vacuous 'experiences' of a plastic, market-led Disney-style heritage. In order to 'enliven', he suggested the balance between 'interpretation' and 'exhibit' had to be right. The Railway Museum in York, which was 10% interpretation and 90% exhibit, might learn something from Jorvik, which was 90% interpretation and 10% exhibit. On the whole, people were interested in people, not artefacts in a social vacuum. The lives of those who made, ran and used the railways was what stirred most people's imaginations. He gave other examples of the 'enlivening' of subject matter. One especially memorable one was from the gallery world - Norman Adams was filmed while painting a work which was later hung in the gallery with a TV monitor on one side showing the video of the artist creating the work.

In the evening of the first day The Last of the Dodos Theatre Group's very entertaining *Captain Environment* captured the message of the afternoon's sessions (on the theme of 'Art and the Interpretation of the Countryside') perhaps more convincingly than some of those sessions themselves. Captain Environment overcame various villainous protagonists like the foulers of the earth or the fellers of the ozone layer with garish pantomine antics and noisy audience participation.

A jovial Magnus Magnusson with one of the Gateway Award winners.

Garish pantomine antics and noisy audience participation are alright on the stage but not necessarily appropriate in the natural environment. Yet, during some of the afternoon seminars the delegates could have been forgiven for thinking that that was what was being recommended. Diana Shipp, from the Broads Authority, was committed, enthusiastic and entertaining, and her 'Blue Tent' project for stimulating a fish's eye view of man's pollution of the Broads water sounded imaginative. But when she went on to describe groups of children on a country walk being 'sung' to from across the water by actors dressed as flowers, one wondered if Captain Environment shouldn't be called in to wipe them out and save Nature from too much interpretation. It's an old dilemma, the question of whether we destroy what we wanted to illuminate by too much interpretive 'fuss'. The artists and poets of nature gained their inspiration and strength from communing in solitude and silence. Is there a danger of starting out by wanting people to understand such feelings for nature that gave rise to Wordsworth's 'Thoughts that do often lie too deep for tears', and their ending up in a boat going round Disney's Jungle World with plastic alligators?

The second day took theatre, writing and music as interesting case studies on how the arts can lend colour and imagination to interpretation. This was taken up in David Lowenthal's witty and erudite final conference address when he quoted sympathetically Miss Lettuce from Schaffer's play, who breathed life into Lowenthal's famous 'foreign country' by playing 'fast and loose' with the history of the stately home she guided people round. He ended his lecture by returning to the image of 'breathing life', describing the famous cartoon sequence by H.M. Bateman called 'The Boy Who Breathed on the Glass in the British Museum'. The boy ends up serving a lifetime in prison for this impropriety and only as an old and broken man is he finally released. His last act is to crawl back into the British Museum, breathe on the glass again, and expire. The breath of life was left on the glass, aborted by curatorial stuffiness.

This excellent conference breathed life, with the help of the arts, through the glass and into our interpretation.

Conference report by;
John Iddon,
Director.
Diploma in Heritage Interpretation,
St Mary's College, Strawberry Hill.

Please note that the 1989 Practice Sheets which cover all the successful projects are already available from the Director (address on back page) at a cost of £3.00 plus 50 pence postage.

COUNTRYSIDE INTREPRETATION. PART 1. SOME THOUGHTS FOR THE 90s

ANDREW JENKINSON

Scenesetters

All around us there are ever increasing, and encouraging, signs that the 1990s will go down in history as the 'Green Decade'. But is that, I wonder in my more cynical moments, paving the way for a rash of heritage centres in the next century charting the way we were in the second half of this one. Will we pay £10 a head to visit "The Dirty Dozen Theme Park" - to float down a reconstruction of a polluted river, complete with noxious smells, rafts of dirty foam and stuffed rats; or sit for half an hour in a fume-filled traffic jam with a recording of the children quarrelling violently in the back seat? Probably not! But these thoughts are prompted by what I perceive as worrying trends in heritage interpretation.

We may be living in a cleaner world in the year 2000. There may be less risk that man will bring about the premature destruction of man through ecological abuse on a global scale. But is there any sign that interpretation will play a significant part in this - that the average person will be any more conscious than at present of the rest of the living world? I would like to think so, but I will not bet on it.

Fifteen years back when SIBH was formed to further the growth and expansion of interpretation, largely as imported from across the Atlantic, I believed differently. Inevitably interpretation has, and should have, evolved and adapted to local circumstances. But here in Britain those circumstances have resulted in "heritage" being hijacked by history, and "heritage interpretation" all too often being swept along with it.

This has highlighted the essential differences that exist between historical and ecological interpretation. Historical interpretation must always be just that. By definition we are no longer a part of history. Our knowledge and understanding of the past is brought to us second hand. The skills of the interpreter are brought in to make our experience of the past as authentic and as interesting as possible (two concepts which sometimes sit uneasily together!). But however accurate the reconstruction, however complete the sensory experience, it is no more than a snapshot view. It is not something of which we are truly a part. We leave Wigan Pier or Yorvik hopefully with a better appreciation of the life and times of 1930s Lancashire or Viking York, and we return (thankfully perhaps) to the 20th century.

If there was significant evidence that in any

Photo courtesy of E. Dorset Heritage Trust.

real sense we learn from history, then I might feel differently about the active role of historical interpretation. But alas we still engage in territorial conflict, communal life is still dominated by individual greed, in short our increased knowledge and understanding of the past does not seem to alter the inherent nature of man.

Ecological interpretation is different in context. It is interpretation of our exisiting surroundings. The role of the interpreter is not to recreate simulated situations, but to construe the complexities of our present environment so that the world is better appreciated and understood. If this environmental or ecological interpretation is successful in producing a heightened awareness and understanding of our present predicament such that we decide to change our behaviour, then this will be reflected in our surroundings. "Surely", I hear many of you saying, "this is in fact happening. This is why we are turning 'greener'. The light has dawned, thanks in part to interpretation."

I would like to share this optimism but, perhaps because I now work freelance and not for an institution, I feel that environmental interpretation is reaching far too few people to have a significant effect. My criteria have changed because my yardstick for the measure of interpretive success has changed. When running a guided walks programme or operating a visitor centre, if one's goals are reached in terms of visitor response the venture is deemed a success. Outside the world of interpretive providers, one is more struck by the numbers of people who have never been on a guided walk or never gone into a visitor centre!

So I feel the potential of environmental interpretation could be greatly increased by the greater use of media that are both physically and psychologically more accessible to the general public. This is largely a matter of integrating interpretive philosophy with other spheres of everyday life. The most fertile field must surely be tourism - an area in which interpreters are already active, but too often as providers of specific tourist attractions rather than as interpreters of the broader scene.

The main problem is undoubtedly the institutional nature of our society, allied to a lack of funds as soon as you try to envisage alternative models. The tourist does not see the countryside neatly parcelled up into areas administered by this local authority or owned by that wildlife protection society. Yet these individual bodies, whether statutory or voluntary, rarely seem capable of presenting a broad and co-ordinated view to the visiting public. Nor do those in the private sector, with a few notable exceptions, see the opportunities offered by a co-operative approach.

Again it is a question of point of view. I have been closely involved with the work of the local County Wildlife Trust for the past twenty years. Interpretation has grown considerably, if patchily, within the wildlife movement in that time and I know that there exist some splendid examples of county trust visitor centres, nature trails and publications. But few, if any, impinge upon me as a tourist. I know about them from within the trust movement. For along with many similar voluntary societies, county trusts are generally poor at marketing their interpretive initiatives, though many such as the National Trust, Woodland Trust and RSPB are successful at marketing membership.

And membership too often serves as a further filter to the effectiveness of interpretation. Membership organisations are at least psychologically exclusive to that great majority who are non-joiners. Many of us will support the cause when the tin is rattled but we do not join the movement. And if we don't belong we depend too often on the fickle selectivity of the mass media to discover what is happening in the world around us.

So where do the opportunities exist for the environmental interpreter to reach the wider public?

Service providers in the tourist industry - in particular accomodation, and transport operators - could do more to encourage intepretive tourism. That is, to develop positive products which tourists would be willing, indeed keen, to buy as an enhancement to their holiday. With the growing popularity of short breaks we should make more use of the informal and low key special interest weekend. I see this as in no way competing with, or detracting from, the specialist field studies function of activity holidays organised by bodies like the Field Studies Council. Rather that hoteliers should simply co-operate with interested parties to ensure that a discovery pack of appropriate literature, possibly with discount admission tickets to appropriate local attractions, forms the basis of your "Going Wild in Midshire Weekend Break".

This does require, of course, that the hotelier is enlightened enough to offer more than simply beds, and as importantly, that the interpretive package is sound, interesting and enjoyable.

Walking is an area of rapidly increasing interest, yet the interpretive content of the average walking guide is minimal. Specialist organisations with an interpretive message to put across could well reach a larger audience through walks leaflets or car tours, broadly titled yet drawing attention to their particular interest, than through many of the more obvious media such as nature trails or visitor centres which attract only the converted. And since walking usually requires transport to or from starting and finishing points there is scope for adding to the type of service already provided by some companies (e.g. Mountain Goat mini-buses) with packs of interpretive literature and sketch maps, as has been pioneered by Badgerline in Avon with Countryside Commission support.

All of this may seem very low key and unexciting alongside the razzamatazz of a high-tech heritage centre. But if it helps to bring a wider public into contact with more varied first hand experience of the countryside; and, through the quality of the interpretive input, enhances their enjoyment and understanding and changes attitudes in the process, then it comes closer to my interpretation of "interpretation" than watching the most realistic of moving heads telling of how times were.

ANDREW JENKINSON

(Andrew Jenkinson concludes his two part article in the August issue).

Scenesetters

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FROM HOMESPUN TO HIGH TECH. N.A.I. Workshop 1989

MICHAEL H. GLEN

Touchstone Associates.

The National Association of Interpretation is broadly the equivalent of SIBH in the States. It has nearly 2000 members, a salaried Director and an active regional and committee structure. It is well regarded by the employers of interpreters which largely mirror our national, local and voluntary landscape and wildlife conservation organisations. Canada, Australia, Taiwan and the UK, among others, figure on the membership list. There is much greater involvement from universities and colleges than in SIBH, but few members with direct interests in the built environment. Partly recognising this, the 1989 workshop was sub-titled *Interpreting for Urban Audiences.*

NAI holds one national workshop each year - and two full years go into the planning of it. In 1992 it will be in Vail, Colorado (invitations have been issued), in 1991 we go to Charleston, South Carolina.

Last November, 700 of us met in the twin cities of Minneapolis/St Paul in the Midwest. Not all were members, but every one was an enthusiast and a potential friend; the legendary openness and warmth of Americans made meeting strangers easy, parting difficult.

Count the value, not the cost

Almost everything about the organisation of the workshop is impressive, from the initial sales pitch to the publication of the proceedings before they began, 454 pages of them! (Mind you, 1988's are still to come.) It was easy to book and, in terms of the package available for five full days, not overly expensive.

Registration, including most meals, cost £135; the principal field trip, and the workshop banquet, £20 each; a huge room in a plush hotel, under £40.00 per night. We had two evening meals to forage for and, of course, an air fare. In November, however, transatlantic flights show how costly internal UK ones are!

There were extras, of course (including local taxes), but few people drank more than an occasional beer. American interpreters are not well paid - about the same as here at ranger level.

After St Paul and before our recent Glasgow conference, I felt we had a lot to learn about running good conferences in SIBH. I believe many share the view that Glasgow represented an upturn in our activities. We just need to keep going up, but it means long hours of planning, meticulous attention to detail, plenty of involvement from plenty of people, good briefing all round and an infusion of top rate outside speakers. Once we do this, we should start exchange visits with NAI.

Well, that's enough of the commercial to justify my £25 membership fee. Now for the colour supplement.

Interpretation on the hoof

Before the workshop, there were two adventure tours on offer. Nine of us opted for four days exploring some of the North Woods/Boundary Waters area of northern Minnesota.

Here Danny Olson, naturalist, teacher, actor, writer, storyteller, leader and intuitive interpreter, introduced us to his territory on the shores of Lake Superior - and a thousand other lakes.

We saw the south end of northbound deer, bald eagles, a dubious moose and traces of much more; we met a brown bear as family several beautiful and gentle 'socialised' wolves and leading wildlife people. We spent time at a magnificent new environmental learning centre at Ely.

We hiked, sang songs, threw snowballs, learned to wolf-howl, ate in a bewildering variety of establishments, slept in similar, and shared an ever-growing friendship amongst our group. Aged 25 to 65 (at a guess), from UK to Hawaii, San Francisco to Vermont, we were a motley crew. It was hard to go our separate ways - or to contemplate howling to a scattered pack. The workshop itself was one great whirl of meetings, meals and social occasions. The agenda ran from 8.30am to 5pm with a variety of evening functions including supper and dancing at Minnesota Zoo (no, *The Animals* were not guesting), interpretive olympics (which defy description), an auction, formal dinner and more dancing.

Most days had keynote speeches from a variety of gurus with the bulk of the programme made up of concurrent sessions. With up to a dozen to choose from, you won and lost; but on the whole the quality of sessions was very high. Individual commitment, professionalism and innate wisdom were everywhere - at all age and job status levels. There was also a degree of ingenuousness!

Personal consideration and sharing were as one expects in the States and joy of joy, almost nobody smoked (or not more than once!). They were extremely rewarding people to be with.

I was interested in the use of the arts in interpretation, so chose sessions accordingly, but also took in interpreting to and of ethnic minorities (I was a one-man minority, after all), the Exxon Valdez oil and Yellowstone fire disasters, and several storytelling sessions. Susan Strauss, who captivated audiences at Warwick, was again a centre of attention!

Precious heritage

However, the singularly memorable

The Environmental Learning Centre at Ely, Northern Minnesota *(Photo - Michael Glen)*

occasions were those where some or all of us were able to learn something of Native American culture and concerns, present conditions and future aspirations. We were taught how to make wrist bands from Basswood, how to take part in the Ute Indian's Bear Dance, how to recognise a heritage older than the white man's.

We heard Sammy Watso, a Canadian Indian, talk of the struggle for freedom, not to be *the same* as everyone else, but to be *different.* His simplicity of language, elegance of delivery, nobility of presence and determination of spirit made for a special and very moving hour or so.

Later that day the same group of us listened to an Ojibwa as he sang his songs of times past, and times present too, of fish-hunting and sweat houses, of motor cars and other men's wars. His unfailing courtesy was characteristic of all Native Americans whom we met. He left a deep impression on all of us.

The last morning of the workshop began with MACWOW!, a mindblowing big-screen demonstration by the Apple Macintosh computer people of just what their fancy boxes of tricks can do with text, sound, video, graphics and limited human intervention.

Immediately afterwards, a NASA man took our blown minds on a searing tour of what the world was doing to itself as seen from his little skytoys. For world, of course, read man. You want pollution? For you, pollution. You want destruction? For you, destruction. You want Armageddon? For you Armageddon. You want hope? for you...

The healing spirit

Well, hope came in the form of Amos Owens, an elderly Dakota (Sioux) medicine man who took a by now drained audience (no breaks since before AppleMac) and gave it new horizons. In a voice which strained many of the delegates' ears, he described how he could help people to rid themselves of their ailments, whether of body, mind or soul.

He himself was recovering from illness, and yet there was no tremor in his voice, no hesitation in the hour-long (or maybe more) delivery, no self-pity. Only after he had made a prayer for us did his age, his infirmity and his exhaustion show themselves.

His prayer was sung for us by his son Raymond, who beat out an insistent and unwavering drum rhythm. Conducted in an extraordinary atmosphere of silence, reverence and comradeship, it was as fitting an end to any convention as any I could imagine. For many of us, it was so truly spiritual that its ramifications are still too pervasive to describe.

It was, most effectively, its own interpretation and, like everything else which worked best, depended entirely upon the presenter. No books on walls, slide tapes or leaflets. Just a man.

The whole workshop was, to quote an American expression I still find difficult to define precisely, really 'neat'. I recommend Charleston to anyone who can persuade someone, if only the bank, to cough up the dollars.

The secrets of the hornets nest *(Michael Glen)*

THE VALUE OF SPECIAL EVENTS AS INTERPRETIVE TOOLS

MARK WALLIS

Past Pleasures.

The use of special events by museums to promote and interpret a new collection or highlight an existing one can bring many benefits. Similarly, stately homes, castles and other historic sites can use special events to good effect to interpret their unique history. Unfortunately, this useful tool has rarely been employed correctly in Britain - special events remain an undervalued and underused resource.

Special events can combine enjoyment with education to subtlely stress the lesson the site wishes to teach in a novel and non-didactic way.

The worth of special events as an intepretive technique has long been recognised by American museums and openair sites. At many heritage sites in the US they are used to increase dramatically visitor numbers or as off-peak promotions to manage peaks and troughs in attendance, while effectively interpreting the site or collection in an fresh and lively manner.

The advantages of such events are four-fold; first, they offer a novel approach without being a constant drain on the resources of the site - the interpreters appear, present the given theme , the disappear; secondly, they offer money-making opportunities or at least cover their own costs; thirdly, they provide excellent photo-opportunities for the media with consequent advantages of publicity for the site; fourthly, visitors respond positively to imaginatively-structured interpretation and interaction, hopefully leaving with more knowledge and enthusiam about the subject. Contented visitors will take away memories of the special event which spur them to return on a normal day - with a pledge to bring friends and family next time. Examples of the positive benefits of fully planned, themed and developed special events can be drawn from Colonial Williamsburg in Virginia, where a series of programmes explore such themes as law and order, women in colonial society and transport. Through the skilful interpretation of the costumed townsfolk, it is easy to understand the hypocrises of the gentry or the frustrations of their slaves.

These programmes bring education in the guise of entertainment to the visiting families - they deal with serious subjects but are not dry and boring. The characterisation makes them lively and interesting but a sound research base prevents the theme from being trivialised.

To succeed, a special event must consist of five interlocking elements. There must be a clear, definable aim in line with interpretive policy of the site; a strong relevant focus tying the event to the site; effective management with full administrative support; an artistic director who will recruit, train and motivate an integrated team of interpreters; and an intelligent use of clear, targeted publicity.

A number of questions must be answered before the event is planned - to whom is the event's message to be conveyed? What should they learn from it? What will attract them to the event? How will they experience the event? What arrangements for control of visitor flow are there? What will it cost (including wear and tear on the site) and what will the visitors spend?

Old Sturbridge Village, Massachusetts uses occasional special events to aid interpretation of town life, recreating celebrations of the 1830s to illustrate community gatherings. These are developed in accordance with the site's interpretive policy of portraying real people in appropriate activities. Sturbridge is also recognised for its effective use of publicity before each event - coverage is organised with the media over an extensive catchment area.

In California, Sutter's Fort's special events programme recreates the daily life of 1846 with characters, trades and activities that are strictly relevant to the site at the time. Each event highlights the changing role of the fort and its environment, which ensures visitors are aware that it is the history of that particular place they are experiencing.

To highlight its curatorial work and financially support its activities, the Clark County Historical Trust in Ohio holds an annual colonial trades fair, circa 1790. The director selects interpreters who undergo a rigorous training course to ensure they contribute to the interpretive goals of the event. He is part of a strong management team responsible for the look and layout of the site, writing and producing relevant literature for visitors, co-ordinating lecturers for the training programme and many other administrative tasks without which the fair would be ill-conceived and amateurish.

1840 Presidential Campaign at Old Sturbridge Village. *(Photo: Robert S. Arnold)*

In Britain, special events are too often used as an interesting add-on to an historical site at which the building simply becomes a beautiful backdrop to an irrelevant jumble of entertainments loosely based on an historical theme. The National Trust uses its properties for well-publicised and targeted special events. However, these events have not been used as interpretive techniques.

West Wycombe Park was the setting for a celebration of the Glorious Revolution of 1688. If this event had been used to interpret the historical and social issues of the day, the crowds could have enjoyed far more than an entertaining spectacle. Chamber music, instead of the jazz band, would have provided a fitting ambience for a team of informed interpreters to present an evocation of William and Mary's court.

In contrast, The National Army Museum initiated an unusually bold special event which fulfilled all the aims of effective interpretation. 'Glorious Revolution?' was an exhibition which had as its centre-piece a full scale late 17th century guardroom. On advertised days during its run, trained members of the History Re-enactment Workshop inhabited the guardroom. They encouraged the visiting public to ask questions about their life and times which helped visitors understand the significance of 1688 in an enjoyable way.

This event proved successful (it attracted record numbers of visitors) because the support structure from the museum ensured there was a guiding artistic policy, a full research base, strong publicity and enthusiastic, knowledgeable interpreters.

The Museum of London highlighted the re-opening of its 18th century gallery with a Twelfth Night event, which was well publicised as a themed evening, including various entertainments of the period. Integrated administrative backup could have ensured desk staff had more information about tickets and booking procedure and, at the event itself, control of visitor flow and planned viewing points would have greatly improved visitors' enjoyment. Encouraging the interpreters to capitalise on the research base offered in the gallery would have tied the event more closely to the interpretive aims of the museum.

My own experience of using special events as an interpretive technique at Littlecote House in Berkshire, where I was artistic director, demonstrated the difficulties of providing accurate information about the building's past without labouring it and producing entertainment which does not trivialise the subject.

William of Orange stayed at Littlecote House in 1688 and this historic event provided a base for interpreting the splendour of a royal visit against the unsettled political climate of the time. Many relevant entertainments were produced in keeping with the interpretive aims, including

a court masque based on inventories and diaries of the period.

However, this extensive programme led to much confusion on the day because the signs and gate leaflet were not precise enough as to times and locations. Also, visitor flow in the house and restaurant was over capacity during the breaks in the programme. Despite these problems, *The New Statesman* commented that "for once, Littlecote was realer and saltier than usual".

The Living History Centre in California, for which I was co-ordinator, taught me the value of thorough training of interpreters for special events. This trust produces an annual Dickens fair - an evocation of Victorian London - to support its year-round programme of educational projects. The centre runs a rigorous and mandatory course of workshops for interpreters prior to the event, at which experts speak on subjects including social and political affairs of the time, manners and dress, research methods and effective ways of communicating with visitors.

This training ensures that the public can question characters with confidence and receive lively and accurate answers, for which interpreters draw on the research and improvisation skills with which they have been prepared.

Preparation, with adequate attention to the five points mentioned above, is the key to successful special events. The organisation must be fully committed to the project and

William of Orange and sycophantic courtiers at Littlecote House.

draw on the strengths of all departments, all of whom may benefit from a well organised event. During my time at Williamsburg, the special events programme was given a significant boost by the co-operation of all departments - from the character interpreters to the marketing staff.

Special events will remain an underused resource in this country while half-hearted attempts fail to capitalise on the resources available. Professionalism meticulously applied in all other quarters is noticeably lacking in the field of special events. Sadly, museum staff seem prepared to lower their standards for historical events and allow approximations that would be intolerable in a static display.

If that knowledge and enthusiasm for the subject was invested in the use of interpreters for appropriate special events, then everyone would benefit.

Mark Wallis is the artistic director of Past Pleasures, a company specialising in historical events for heritage sites in the US and Britain.

Letter to the Editor.

Dear Sir,
I refer to Jane Malcolm-Davies' article in Issue No 43. I do not know whether Jane Malcolm-Davies actually went to this Society's display at Goodrich Castle but the fact that she is mistaken about the date of the event tends to suggest that she did not.

To dismiss our activities over that weekend in August 1989 as "rough hessian and bubbling cauldrons" does not do justice to the organisation with which the event was set up or presented. That organisation was open to scrutiny by SIBH members at the seminar which was held on Friday August 4 as the event was in the process of being established.

The "rough hessian" was lovingly applied over a period of several days by our unpaid volunteers - in order to mask the galvanised safety wire mesh which would have otherwise destroyed any illusion of 1645 - and the "bubbling cauldrons" contained soap for the Laundry, tallow for the Chandler, lead for the bullet-makers, or food for the 130 strong garrison which was fed twice daily from the enormous stonebuilt fire, every piece of which was carried in and out of the castle over the course of the 48 hours for which the display lasted.

If she did attend, did Ms. Malcolm-Davies talk to the Laundress about the soap she was making from the basic ingredients? Did she quiz the Chandler about the problems of drying tallow candles - or beeswax - or rushlights - in the heat of that August day?

Did she ask what was in the Kitchen cauldrons? Was she able to view the enormous diversity of menus? The Governor, Sir Henry Ingam, was served at table in his quarters with an array of beautifully prepared dishes reflecting the culinary art of the early seventeenth century, while the soldiers guarding all the approaches to Goodrich were fed upon locally produced staple foods - just as carefully researched.

Was she able to appreciate the skill of the Bodgers, turning greenwood on their treadle lathes and building benches and the like well beyond the capacity of the Stone Age into which she casts us?

Her visit to the Apothecary must have shown her that we demonstrate more than the military arts. Each patient, made up by the artist on the chapel roof, was able to explain the symptoms of their ailment and the "cure" for each was all too painfully displayed!

Surely the shepherd told her that the stock of sheep, pigs and chickens which he was tending in the base of the tower had been brought into the castle because the seige - at that stage in the castle's history - was being pressed hard and caltrops had been found in a nearby ford.

Perhaps not.

Perhaps she did not experience the clinging beggar; the gentry dancing so expertly to the accompaniment of Hautbois' excellent music; the explanation of the military situation using a hand drawn and coloured map - after Speed; the excellence of the equipment worn and carried by the soldiers; the ease with which the members of the garrison were able to converse with the 2600 visitors - at least four foreign tongues were spoken - using first and third person interpretation; the aromas - naturally generated, but painstakingly organised - which added yet another dimension to this carefully constructed display.

If she didn't then I, as the event's organiser, am sorry.

It will not do, however, for Ms. Malcolm-Davis to write off the activities of the members of the English Civil War Society as " attempts to gain respectibility" by "beer-swilling boors".

The enthusiasm of our members, which she quite correctly identifies as a major resource

of re-enactment societies, depends upon positive feedback from respected sources. This, in our case, has been forthcoming as a result of the care which we take in the preparation and execution of those events which we term "living history".

The event at Goodrich was extensive, lively factually supported, educational, entertaining and very much appreciated by visitors and participants alike.

A little more careful research would have determined that those individuals for whom she expresses fulsome praise in her article had their grounding in interpretive techniques as members of this Society. It was the pioneer group from this Society which began the activities at Kentwell. Museum professionals are well-represented in our ranks. Our research is soundly based.

It would appear that Ms. Malcolm-Davies' is not.

Yours faithfully,

Jonathan Taylor,
Director: The English Civil War Society.

The author replies

Sir,
I am grateful to Jonathan Taylor of the English Civil War Society for this opportunity to explain both my background in journalism and the research methods employed in the compilation of my recent article on live interpretation.

I have worked for several trade magazines and newspapers and now write for the *Museums Journal.* An edited version of the article on live interpretation appeared in *The Times* in early December. My present job is as a researcher with the Norwich Area Tourism Agency. Thus, my experience in research and reportage is somewhat less cursory than Mr Taylor suggests.

If he had read my article with a little more care, he would have found that it most certainly did not "lump all re-enactment societies together". The aim of my research has been to provide an analysis of the different interpretive skills offered by such amateur organisations. I have also identified one of the main reasons why these resources are not used to the full by museums and other heritage sites - the lack of time devoted to helping, directing and advising re-enactment societies.

The Jorvik Viking Festival has demonstrated the value of such a relationship in not only improving the picture of the past presented by the amateur Vikings but by bringing the museum more effectively to life.

His doubt that I attended the event at Goodrich Castle is well founded - my comments are not based on mere personal opinion. My approach with most recreations of the past has been to ask a number of visitors to describe their reactions to the interpreters and comment on their effectiveness. But Mr Taylor need not suppose I have never seen his society for myself - I have visited camps, battles and the Whitehall Parade on numerous occasions.

I am pleased to hear that Mr Taylor "depends upon positive feedback from respected authorities" these "respected authorities" no doubt turn a blind eye to the ranks of female soldiery, dressed in breeches too ill-fitting to disguise their sex. These "respected authorities", it seems, are also happy to excuse the almost complete lack of religious references in representation of a time so beset by theological debate. Goodrich was not even blessed with a chapel, a point picked up by all my interviewees.

It seems to me that Mr Taylor exhibits one of the most common problems of the re-enactment world: the well-intentioned and hard-working organisers of these soceities are rarely aware of what goes on in the name of authenticity within their own ranks. The English Civil War Society is a huge organisation with large numbers of members who have none of the commitment to research Mr Taylor demonstrates in his letter. He is not alone.

Mr Taylor should, however, examine the reasons why those individuals with a more responsible attitude to historical authenticity left his organisation in the first place. It is not their membership of his society to which they owe their competence but to the very fact that they left it and went to pursue careers within the museums establishment - namely the National Army Musuem and Colonial Williamsburg.

Re-enactment societies are not constituted to foster research and implement findings in a methodical way - that individual members are responsible and carry out "soundly based" research I do not doubt. What I do doubt is that this can filter through an amateur organisation and produce the controlled standards of display required in any other form of interpretation, without adequate curatorial control.

Fort Nelson, near Portsmouth, is home to the Portsdown Artillery Volunteers. Dressed as volunteers of the 1860s they present re-enactments that are carefully researched under the guidance of the Royal Armouries' Keeper of Artillery. As a result, their presentation of field gun and garrison gun drill is accurate and safety-conscious. The English Civil War Society may number musuem curators in their ranks, if so, their professional influence is not apparent - the gun drill offered at Gosport last year bore no resemblance to William Eldred's contemporary descriptions in *The Gunners Glasse* of 1646.

It is not simply the research base which is inconsistent - the use of first and third person communication techniques has not been stratified in any society other than the History Re-enactment Workshop. A linguist was consulted to help develop a pseudo-17th century language in which the first person interpreters may converse comfortably with the public.

The English Civil War Society may have other languages than English in its repertoire but it certainly does not know the body language of rank and respect - if members are in role, courtesy is an obligation owed to all other people in role. To suggest that no one in the society is aware of these deficiences would be untrue -well-intentioned policies go astray as the rules and regulations fall through the ranks.

I do not offer a blanket criticism for the society, the Roundhead Association (one half of the society) has debated the question of interpretive technique, coming to the conclusion that communication with the public and historical authenticity must be balanced with the enjoyment of members.

Mr Taylor has misconstrued my meaning, if he thinks that I have written-off the society as "beer swilling boors". I have interviews which record more worthy authorities than I commenting that they had complaints from visitors about "ungracious" behaviour. And Mr Taylor cannot deny the many boasts in his own King's Army to having "drunk the local pubs dry".

I have been researching the use of the live interpreters in all shapes and forms for the past two years, throughout Britain and on the Continent. I am just about to tour the US to discuss training with various organisations there and to speak at an Ohio museums conference. I spent most of my year on the heritage interpretation diploma at Strawberry Hill investigating live interpretation projects and providing the Royal Armouries with a feasibility study on the subject. An American publisher has recently invited me to write a guide to re-enactment in Britain.

My conclusions are that amateur organisations (for many of which I hold honorary, associate or full membership) are an extremely rich resource but that they need to take a less self-congratulatory and more responsible attitude towards the research on which they base their presentations. Similarly, museums need to view this resource with more confidence and provide encouraging and helpful access to research resources - and direct live presentations with the same eye for detail they would apply to other interpretive techniques.

Yours faithfully,

Jane Malcolm-Davies BA (Hons)

MOTOR INSURANCE

The Committee would like to alert members to the need to protect themselves when driving their cars on Society business. Persons who are organising events for the Society, who are acting as Award Judges, who are on committees/working parties or who are in any way travelling at the behest of the Society should ensure that their insurer knows of this and approves. Otherwise any claims made may not be honoured because the Insurer judges that the travel was not for social and domestic reasons.

CHAIRMAN'S CHATTER

Since the last edition of the journal in December, a number of significant things have happened in the development of the Society. Some of these are the culmination of intiatives which began some time ago and others are key events which provide pointers for the way ahead.

* Alan Machin took up his appointment as our full-time Director on 3rd January. This was the end result of an initiative begun by my predecessor, Ian Parkin. Alan's presence will enable the Society to promote itself more widely and effectively, increase membership and widen the range of services offered to members. Equally important, it will give us the space to raise the profile of interpretation nationally - and even further afield!

* We have decided, with much regret and after a great deal of discussion, to move from the office space offered at Manchester Polytechnic alongside C.E.I. The principal reason is that the space available is small and there would be no opportunities for expansion. This space is also the only area available for C.E.I. to expand and our presence could constrain their plans. Consequently we are relocating at Dean Clough in Halifax. Nevertheless we wish to ensure that we take every opportunity to work co-operatively with C.E.I. despite our geographical separation.

* Martin Orram has produced his report, commissioned by Carnegie UK Trust, into the opportunities for closer co-operation or a merging of SIBH and CEI. At the time of writing, the implications are still under discussion, but in essence Martin concludes that a merger is not appropriate, but that there are opportunities for more co-operation between the two organisations.

In conclusion, as my term of office as Chairman comes to an end, may I thank my Committee for their support, and wish my successor every success in taking the Society and interpretation from strength to strength.

A DRIVE FOR EXCELLENCE

The Society's first Director, ***Alan Machin,*** *took up his post at the New Year. He comments here on the tasks ahead:*

Like any completely new job, that of Society Director involves many things being set up for the first time. With a Society as active as SIBH there is also a stimulating pressure caused by the number of activities already moving. Besides arranging a permanent office and centering in it some of the administrative jobs which were before done in diverse locations, there is the work associated with a number of new projects.

The Durham Conference and AGM will give an excellent chance for me to meet members. Much of the AGM arrangements is mine to do as I am still the Honorary Secretary, a post which must be passed on to someone else at the Annual Meeting. Making sure it goes well takes time, not only because this is the first that I have organised, but also because we are all anxious to see the most professional of standards reached.

One of the most important steps has been the establishment of a permanent office. By the time that you read this we should be based in Halifax. The earlier aim of an office alongside CEI at Manchester Polytechnic ran into difficulties, and faced with a quite complex set of considerations the Committee decided to accept an offer of the former UK2000 regional office space in the West Yorkshire town. This consists of five rooms in Dean Clough, the amazing assembly of imposing stone-built mills close to the town centre. For well over a century they were the home of Crossley Carpets, but became empty in 1982 and they were then bought by an industrialist called Ernest Hall. He created a centre of excellence containing manufacturing, services, training and cultural endeavours run by all kinds of private companies and public bodies. Besides two thousand people earning their livelihoods in offices with from one employee to several hundred, there are others providing a supporting programme ranging from taxis to typing, from the arrangement of travel to the filling of teeth.

The building of closer working ties with CEI is seen as having the highest priority, and already proposals have been put forward for half-a-dozen or more projects. At the same time SIBH will increase its involvement with work done in places like Losehill Hall and St Mary's College, Strawberry Hill on matters of interest to interpreters. It seems clear that during the '90s many more people will become involved in interpretation: the number and range of centres where it is now a part of research, teaching or consultancy work has already grown rapidly.

Another reason for this view is that SIBH will take a lead in increasing the profile of interpretation. The 2nd World Congress at Warwick University in 1988 foresaw some of the involvements - not only in environmental matters but tourism, community regeneration, education and the arts. All of these are themselves growth areas. SIBH now has the resources and experience to promote itself even better that it has done in the past. An increased membership and more involvement by the membership will be the starting points of a drive for excellence to be undertaken over the next few months.

DIARY DATES

APRIL 3rd-6th EDUCATION AND INTERPRETATION IN ZOOS. CEI Training Course, Manchester. Details 061 -228 6171

APRIL 9th-11th OUTDOOR TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT. Practical workshop for experienced trainers, Peak District. Contact - Peter Townsend (0433) 20373

APRIL 10th-12th SHADES OF GREEN - working towards 'green tourism' in the countryside. University of Leeds. Contact - Steve Green (0904) 702059

APRIL 18th RIVERBANK CONSERVATION. Hatfield Polytechnic. Contact - Marianne Hall (070 72) 79520.

APRIL 18th-20th INTERPRETIVE PLANNING IN THE COUNTRYSIDE. CCE, University of Newcastle. Details (091-232) 4950.

APRIL 20th-22nd SIBH SPRING CONFERENCE. IMPRESSIONS OF THE NORTH EAST, Durham. Contact - Graeme McLearie (0429) 836533

APRIL 26th WOODLAND CRAFTS - PAST AND PRESENT. Folk Life Society Seminar. Museum of English Rural Life, University of Reading. Contact Roy Brigden (0734) 318663

MAY 14th BUILDINGS INTERPRETATION FOR MUSEUMS. Ironbridge Gorge. Contact - Judith Alfrey.

JUNE 13th THE WATER ENVIRONMENT - OUR CULTURAL HERITAGE. NEC Birmingham. Contact NRA Conference, 52 Frederick Road, Edgbaston, Birmingham.

JUNE 13th-16th EUROPEAN FESTIVAL OF ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION (see page 4).

PUBLICATIONS

'Wardening the Shore' by Susan Gubbay. Marine Conservation Society.

This 95 page booklet is sub-titled ' A practical guide to furthering marine conservation' and was commissioned by the World Wide Fund for Nature and the Countryside Commission. It concentrates on techniques for interpreting the marine and coastal environments with a strong emphasis on conservation. 'One of the best ways of furthering marine conservation is for you to build up an appreciation and concern for the marine environment amongst the general public and to inform them of how they can help through their own actions.'

The book is clearly presented and written in a readable and accessible stlye. It's comprehensive in its coverage and particularly good at detailing how conservation/interpretation of marine environments differ from that on land. Also very good are the check list for individual techniques. These range from shore walks and touch tanks to underwater nature trails and glass bottom boat trips. Susan Gubbay has drawn her examples not only from what currently happens here in the U.K. but also from Europe, North America and Japan.

This guide will be a good basic handbook for those wardens, rangers, etc who do little or no site-based interpretation at present. For others who already do, it will perhaps provide inspiration and confidence, and encourage them to try out new ideas.

Yvonne Hosker

Heritage Sites: Strategies for Marketing and Development. Edited by: D.T. Herbert, R.C. Prentice, & C.J. Thomas. Published by Avebury Books

Reading this book was like meeting an old friend. Four years ago I was a member of the Cadw: Welsh Historic Monuments' management team which identified the need for a broad pallette of research to help refine our marketing efforts. The SEREN Research Group from University College Swansea was subsequently commissioned to undertake this work. This publication is, essentially, a synthesis of that research.

At various stages during the research programme, SEREN held briefing sessions for Cadw managers. These meetings between practitioners and researchers proved most stimulating, allowing the empirical research to be appropriately translated into action by professionals. The research findings at this stage were used effectively. Unfortunately, the book does not build upon this essential relationship. It lacks the necessary insights, influence and knowledge of a heritage manager.

This is a shame because the work of SEREN is firstclass and deserves a wider audience. The authors are, however, overambitious in their definition of the market for this book..." a guidebook for practitioners ... academics, planners and policy makers ... and it also has a more general interest for many people in the wider public who have more than a passing interest in heritage" ... this statement shows a lack of precision in target marketing, surely one of the strategies which the book aims to tackle.

The publishers are to blame in further diluting the potential of the book. It is dreadfully produced, overpriced yet cheap in its appearence. As an exercise in good marketing it singularly fails. The text, a basic typed font, is difficult to read, whilst the tables are so difficult to follow that they are almost unintelligible.

There are 9 chapters in the book which take the reader, logically, through leisure trends and heritage markets; market segmentation; media effectiveness; interpretation; pricing policy; and local impacts. Contributions are from five different authors, four of whom are academics without any heritage management or marketing experience. The fifth contributor is John Carr, the Director of Cadw:Welsh Historic Monuments. Inexplicably, however, his essential introduction to the need for adequate research as an aid to management is placed last. It provides the raison d'etre for the research and should have introduced the book.

All the topics covered are pertinent and relevant. Long Paragraphs, (one over 2½ pages), with lengthy sentences (one of 67 words), and a proliferation of facts, makes this turgid to read and use. It is full of essential material, but it is difficult to distill out the essentials. This, combined with the other comments, particularly the distancing from the practioner, distracts from the ability of this work to achieve its potential. In addition, the opportunity to draw from a wider range of heritage experiences has been overlooked. The authors limit their review, in the main, to studies undertaken in Eire and the Isle of Man. These hardly constitute broad perspective, albeit that a shared Celtic, rural, heritage is common to each.

The chapter on interpretation is a restatement of principles and practice, and quotes from Tilden. Unfortunately there is no reference to much of the innovative and imaginative work which is now taking place in interpretation. Don Alderidge's 1975 work is also taken as a benchmark, but no mention is made of his seminal paper at the Second World Congress of Heritage Interpretation in 1988. The work of the Society and CEI is not mentioned, nor is the Gateway Interpret British Awards. This book also uses 'interpretative' instead of 'interpretive', the latter of which became accepted convention in the late 1960's.

In conclusion, and here I will admit that I am reviewing a book editied by three friends and mentors, I am ambivalent in my feelings about this publication. It is the result of a solid and thorough research programme undertaken by absolutely professional researchers. As a publication to guide practioners, however, it unfortunately misses its target. The price will also severely restrict its market. Perhaps its all a bit like my university reports, 'could do better'.

Dr. Terry Stevens.

Pond Design Guide for Schools, by Graham Flatt. Published by Hampshire Books. £3.00.

No addtion to our landscape represents such good value for money, effort and time as a pond. In a school it is particularly useful as a means of creating a fascinating microcosm in which all the principles of ecological checks and balances can be demonstrated. But before it can be used educationally the pond must be successfully constructed - and help in that direction is the single-minded objective of this slim (12 page A4) volume.

From initial planning, through design, construction (by different methods), to planting and maintenance the whole sequence is concisely described and tabulated; with detailed recommendations about materials, specifications and costs. Follow this advice and you will have a superb educational resource awaiting your skills to interpret it.

Andrew Jenkinson

The Past is a Foreign Country by David Lowenthal. Cambridge University Press £13.95 Paperback. £37.50 Hard cover.

A book of impeccable scholarship but one which is, at the same time, a rattling good read. Lowenthal ranges over written history and surveys cultural objects to extract the underlying premises and attitudes which they can reveal. He makes an accomplished guide. Whether alluding to the edicts of Diocletian or Bunny girls, diachronic contexts or "Gray Panthers" reincarnation or candledrip light bulbs, he always has something interesting and relevant to say.

This eclecticism is not for effect; his sources are brought in to sustain his arguments and in his opening chapter he maps out very carefully what he intends to say. His next chapters explore the burdens and the benefits of the past to subsequent generations. The past might be venerated, despised, exploited, ignored, misapplied.

Each age has seen all these attitudes co-existing, just as ours does, but with a particular stance dominating the others.

The middle section of the book explores the question of how we know the past and discusses Memory, History and Relics. It is here that the practising interpreter might feel most at home. Lowenthal strides over some familiar ground; we sanitize the past rather than show the true and harsh reality, we compromise between historical accuracy and