society for the
interpretation
of Britain's heritage

E.V. Gatacre

DESIGN

or, preferably, Non-Design

The principal address during the Society's meeting at Stoke on Trent in November was given by E V (Peter) Gatacre. It was a show-stopper of distinction, leaving its audience pressed against the backs of their chairs, their interpretive souls reeling as they attempted to absorb a rapid-fire salvo of ideas - and ideals. Not all members may agree with what Gatacre says; the designers may well be provoked into replying, but in the context of the Stoke weekend the remarks were more than relevant.

Our host, David Sekers, when he first mentioned this evening to me, referred to your Society as *the Heritagers*. This was, I thought, a delightful abbreviation. Had he called you *the Interpreters*, I must tell you that I would have thought about you very differently. For the first question which the individual members of your Society must surely ask their consciences before involving themselves in any actual project, is 'Am I fired with enthusiasm for this *specific* place or collection of things?' The desire to interpret should follow from a desire to share enthusiasm - for place or object - with other people. The method cannot lead.

If your impulse is fascination by the method of interpretation - then God help us! To take an extreme case, we know where fascination by method got Disney - an immense audience certainly, but 'magic, mystery and individuality' (to quote Richard Schickel*) ' - most of all individuality - is consistently destroyed' and destroyed just when these virtues are most longed for by the young. Schickel goes on to point out that in the work of the great naturalists 'the more the knowledge, the greater the sense of ultimate mystery' and he warns against the super

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NEWSLETTER NINE SPRING 1978

THE SOCIETY

The Society for the Interpretation of Britain's Heritage was formed in April 1975 to provide a forum for people engaged in studying Britain's heritage and in both planning and managing interpretive programmes and facilities which relate to this heritage.

It draws its members from a wide range of organisations - including local authorities, statutory and educational bodies and major voluntary organisations - engaged in interpretation of one kind or another.

Copies of the constitution, of the consultative document which led to the formation of the Society and membership application forms may be obtained from the Secretary.

THE OFFICERS

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THE NEWSLETTER

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INTERPRETATION

At last the Newsletter has provoked response. Two letters published in this issue take issue. The first was provoked by remarks of our Chairman in his Devon address and reflect the that it was intended to be a provocative paper. The second, however, goes to the roots, editorially speaking. Apart from criticism of the physical presentation of this journal, it calls in question its content. This is good; more comment will be welcomed.

It is interesting to note, at the same time, that Brian Goodey in his *Interpreting the Conserved Environment* (reviewed in this issue) refers to the Newsletter. He describes it as 'Very useful'. But, and the big but is what he goes on to say, 'The pages of the *Newsletter* seldom hint at the growing isolation which some professional interpreters seem to enjoy; the subtle shift from calls for professional standards to calls to the professional standard are already evident.'

At the risk of criticism from the large sector of the membership who are (justifiably) fearful of over-academising the art or craft of interpretation, it seems that Goodey's *own* fears could provide a topic of discussion at a future meeting. Since Terence Lee's address to us in 1975 we have remained well tethered to the practical.

Training in Trust

As evidence of its increasing involvement in heritage matters and interpretation, the Carnegie UK Trust has produced and circulated a questionnaire on interpretive training needs. It accompanies a report of the CUKT working party which studied training needs and development of interpretation, and also guidance notes for interpretation schemes. All the main statutory and voluntary bodies which might have staff connected with interpretive schemes have received copies, as have local authorities. Further details are available from Geoffrey Lord, Secretary, CUKT, Comely Park House, Dunfermline, Fife KY12 7EJ.

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technician who, by contrast, 'bludgeons the imagination of children with mediocrity'.

WRITTEN WITH LOVE

Kenneth Clark, when receiving an award for the services to education, in America, said of his *Civilisation* programmes, 'They contain a good many mistakes and slips of the tongue - but they are written with love. And that, I hope, will have some effect on people who see them. They will find something to kindle their enthusiasm. Thus far I believe they are educational'.**

If your conscience passes the test of love for your subject, I beg you, if you are the client, to be brave. Don't be intimidated by *expertise*, by *professionalism*, by the snobbishness of *good design*. Take heart, we are approaching an era - if we are not already well into it - when the best design is non-design. Don't feel obliged to compare your project with every treatment to date. It is the subject - your individual subject - that matters. Not a comparison with other people's methods.

Now the next bit is not for the designers present (I am not at all sure that the last bit was): I suspect most people take on a designer to combat loneliness and doubt - and all too often then find that they are not being chauffered in their own car, but are captives in somebody else's tram. The trouble about choosing designers is that you can't form any judgement of them from what they say. Their words always sound splendid; but words are totally misleading in forming an opinion of a person's creative sensibility (as opposed to his critical ability). If you yourself have, or someone you know and trust in visual matters has, dexterity and some related experience - then do the work yourselves. Why not write the text of your own labels and letter them too, if your hand is legible? It is a good way to make sure you keep the matter short.

WHO NEEDS COLOUR CODES?

Stylishness isn't so important - in fact it can be a hindrance: who wants to end up with reverse printing, backlighting and illegible upper-case captions on curling plastic, all set to a beautiful grid? Who needs such products of expertise as colour codes? They don't even work in hospitals - the only people to whom they made sense are telephone engineers.

David Sekers, here in Gladstone potteries, makes splendid use of plain chalk and of black marker, without falling into whimsey, which is the trap at the opposite extreme. What of audio-visual? Surely everybody demands that in the television age? Well do they? Why is fishing the most popular sport if everybody is so restless? Of course if you insist on your designer telling a complex story that you should really have made into a book, he will have to resort to the whole gamut of mind-confining aids. And then it will be nobody's fault but your own if you end up with every trick in his repertoire and with servicing and maintenance nightmares for the rest of your, or your unfortunate successors', careers.

At the other end of the scale, beware of the summary. Of course we have to make them for ourselves all the time - but don't fool yourself into thinking that they will mean anything to those who won't know the full story already. And, by the way, if you think you can describe something adequately in words or in photographs, or on film, then please use your creativity to let your public enjoy this in the comfort of their own armchairs at home, by the means of a book or a television film, rather than expect them to waste petrol, tire their legs and strain their eyes to see the same thing on the walls of a visitor centre.

JOYLESS DOGGEDNESS

I have twice made the mistake of trying to describe, honestly, the contents of an exhibition on the walls outside it. No doubt I satisfied my conscience; but the description meant nothing to prospective visitors and only the inveterate readers of that sort of thing read it, with their usual joyless doggedness. The same sort of joyless doggedness with which the serious first hundred arrivals asked for a 'route description' when a

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landscape garden for which I am responsible opened recently. Now it's not that sort of garden. If the serious first hundred had been provided with a route description it would have satisfied a need they had been taught to feel. But it would not have made them wiser or happier, except in the sense that I once felt happy and wise when walking down a street in Siena, as a student, ticking off palace and church facades, right and left, in my guide book, only to find, when I reached the end of the street - which should have debouched into a large square - that I had my book open at the wrong page and all the descriptions applied to buildings in a quite different town.

Madame Tussaud's devoted part of their 1970 Amsterdam exhibition to details from Hieronymus Bosch's pictures, painted on lit spheres, segments and hemispheres, some revolving one way, some the other. It was meant to reflect the contemporary scene in Amsterdam, in a manner that would not date, even when the scene changed. Fortunately there is very little certainty about the meaning of Bosch's imagery, so we did not have to explain that. In a descriptive booklet we did provide something about his life and circumstances, and scotched a few of the more usual and the less picturesque errors. However we felt obliged to explain something on the spot; so I put up, in rather pompous brass letters on the wall at the entrance

Brilliant and polyglot, I said to myself; but I don't believe it meant anything to anybody, except to those who recognised its inadequate crudity.

In the London Madame Tussaud's *Trafalgar*, which was finished in 1966 using sound, light and smell, we installed some very ambitious graphics, in the late '60s taste. One was a coloured animated diagram, showing the stages of the sea battle and the movement of each vessel. 'Oh dear,' said the conscientious visitor, 'I've never been able to understand battle plans, it is stupid of me - but what a brilliant way of showing them.' One person at least saw through it all - Henry Moore - who said, 'Now at last I understand what kinetic art is all about'.

BE TOLERANT

Which leads me to another and final point. When this and another piece of graphics (the latter using fashionable coloured neon tubes and plate glass. weighing about 5 tons, and saying *WAR* in agonisedly flickering red letters) were blown up by an Irishman, we were delighted. 'Ah ha,' we thought, 'now we can get it right ... use all that valuable feedback and analysis ... redress, where fashionable '60s TV graphics put us wrong. We are going to do it much better now.'

But we didn't, you know. Tinkering seldom helps. The mistakes are mysteriously just as important a part of a whole as are the successes. And that's particularly true of the buildings and townscapes about which you mind; perhaps it's even true of nature. I beg you - be tolerant of accidents, leave old mistakes alone. Future generations will bless you for it.

**Walt Disney*, Weidenfeld and Nicholson 1968
**quoted in his *The Other Half*, John Murray 1977

Water, Water...

Peter Townsend reports on the *WATER RECREATION AND INTERPRETATION* conference held in December.

The variety of organisations (24 in all) represented at this conference indicated the strength of interest in the interrelated problems of water supply, recreation and interpretation.

The sessions commenced with two papers, one by Mrs Yates, (National Water Council and Chairwoman of Government Recreation Management Training Committee), and the other by Mr Humphries, (Chairman, Water Space Amenity Commission), which were concerned with the broader aspects of water-based recreation. In particular, Mrs Yates advocated providing tourist accommodation at new developments such as Kielder Reservoir, or at old sites which could be used more efficiently. The more intensive use of our urban canals and rivers was urged by Mr Humphries, particularly as many people, especially children, could not get to car-based rural facilities like Graffam Reservoir.

Mr Casson (North West Water Authority) and Mr Gittins (Welsh Water Authority) described the Anglezarke scheme and the site interpretation at Llyn Brenig, respectively. Both speakers emphasised the value of effective co-operation between all the authorities and landowners in the successful development of their schemes.

Mr Jackson (Severn Trent Water Authority) outlined the interpretation at Lake Vrynwy. He also suggested that there were unlimited opportunities (and great demand) for interpretation on water authority land. This included not only rural reservoirs, but also the more untraditional sites, such as sewage works, pumping stations and fisheries.

The need for a regional approach to water resource planning and interpretation was stressed both by Mr Baynes from the Lakes National Park and by Dr George (Nature Conservancy Council) speaking about the Norfolk Broads. In these areas excessive recreational use is threatening to destroy many of their unique qualities.

Mr Hartwright (Ready Mixed Concrete) ended the conference in fine style with an account of his exciting and lavish proposals for the Thorpe Water Park near Staines. This commercially-run park will cater for top-class water sports training and events, informal recreation and interpretation on landscaped gravel pits. Interpretation will be on the theme of *Britain's History as a Seafaring Nation* with authentic replicas of historic boats and extensive exhibitions.

Full reports of the conference are available from Peter Townsend, Principal, Peak National Park Study Centre, Losehill Hall, Castleton, Derbyshire, S30 2WB.

Mere Interpretation

The exhibition which features the Past History of Martin Mere and aspects of Conservation in the North West has been completed and is on display at the Wildfowl Trust, Martin Mere, Lancashire. Besides this exhibition aimed at the general public, there have been developments in the preparation of material available for Educational parties using the centre, these include worksheets

(Brian Gadsby)

for junior children, workcards, overhead transparency material and topic workboxes. Also being developed at the moment is a series of videotape films on particular aspects of Wildfowl biology and the Martin Mere environment.

We are also in the process of organising a series of 1-day introductory courses for in-service teachers based on the Martin Mere environment. Also planned for this summer is a 1½ day course for teachers on Wildfowl biology. Any teachers interested in the last two items should contact: Brian Gadsby, Senior Education Officer, The Wildfowl Trust, Martin Mere, Burscough, Lancashire.

NOVA SCOTIA - 1

INTERPRETATION AT KEJIMIKUJIK AND FUNDY NATIONAL PARKS

Kejimikujik National Park lies about 120 miles NW of Halifax, Nova Scotia amid a 'lake studded landscape'. It is an area originally lived in by Micmac Indians and later European settlers used it as a hunting area. The interpretation programme aims to help visitors understand and enjoy not only the natural features but also the human history attached to the area.

In June 1977 and throughout the summer, lectures, slide shows and other entertainment were given every evening in the open-air theatre. Each member of the interpretive staff prepared two contributions and the summer programme was worked out to include everyone. In addition there was a programme of guided walks - *Beech Grove Walk, Micmac Memories Walk, Old Farm Walk* - and the Mersey and Fairy Bay Paddles. The guided paddle was particularly appropriate and visitors travelled either in their own or hired canoes.

Fundy National Park in New Brunswick has activities such as tennis, swimming and golf which are not normally associated with the conventional idea of a Canadian National Park. For this reason the type of visitor and his expectations may be different from those using the other parks. There is a varied and large amount of interpretive material available.

There has been an 'interpretive newspaper' for four years, *Fundy Tidings - Nouvelles*. Both French and English words mean *news* but *Tidings* is also meant as a pun on the sometimes 40' high tides experienced in the Bay of Fundy. This free duplicated handout keeps visitors informed of organised and natural happenings in the Park and provides a useful way of encouraging visitors to become involved with interpretive staff through small competitions. Staff-organised nature walks or self-guided trails are also inportant in providing contact with visitors and there is a special Junior Interpretation Programme. This encourages children to investigate the park environment and like some of the walks is operated on a free ticket system. There has been overwhelming demand in the past for these activities and the system seems effective in ensuring a suitably sized visitor group.

Barry Spencer is Assistant Park Interpreter at Fundy and a Member of the Association of Canadian Interpreters. The Association is advancing the interpretation of the natural and human environment of Canada with members having a common desire to help people understand and appreciate Canada's heritage. The Association of Canadian Interpreters was formed in October 1975 with the following objectives:

a) to encourage communication among all individuals and agencies involved in the interpretation of the natural and human environment.
b) to provide opportunities for the development of interpretive skills.
c) to further development of standards by which interpretive excellence may be recognised and encouraged.
d) to promote an awareness of interpretation as a worthwhile vocation and to promote the provision of opportunities in the educational system for the professional development of interpreters.
e) to promote understanding by governments, agencies, organisations and the public of the interpretation of the natural and human environment.
f) to represent the interests of interpreters and interpretation as may be required in fulfilment of the Association's goal and objectives.

Certainly, anyone visiting Canada should be in touch with The Association of Canadian Interpreters, PO Box 56, Postal Station A, Hull, Quebec.

Guided Paddle on the River Mersey Kejimikujik National Park, Nova Scotia. Interpreter describing vegetation

Barry Spencer was interested to hear of the SIBH and I am sure that he or the Association would be glad to put members in contact with colleagues in Canada with similar interests.
Stan Frost

NOVA SCOTIA - 2

INTERPRETATION AT THE NATIONAL HISTORIC PARKS IN CAPE BRETON, NOVA SCOTIA

A short visit to Canada in June '77 provided a chance to see some of the current developments at Baddeck and Louisbourg.

The site at Baddeck is dedicated to the work of Sir Alexander Graham Bell and his associates who worked not only on sound and telephones but also on medical and aeronautical inventions. The museum is housed in a building built in the shape of the tetrahedron, (fig 1) although at first sight it is taken to be merely an unusual 'A' frame. The Tetrahedron was the basic shape used by Bell for his many experiments with kites to test the principles of flight. In 1907 the *Cygnet* made the first flight of a man-carrying kite in Canada. It was towed behind a steamer on the Bras d'Or Lake opposite Baddeck and it rose to more than 150 feet.

Bell's connection with Baddeck extended over almost 40 years until his death in 1922. His equipment, models and photographs were inherited by his daughters who gave them to the nation with the proviso that a building be constructed to house them. Many of the models have needed repair and some of those on display are copies built using original materials, such as silk for the kites, which are less easily available now than they were in the 1890's.

The collection of black and white enlargements provides a valuable record of the life of the Bell family and the local community. The photographs are hung in huge albums fastened to the wall. There is a clear area around them to allow visitors to stand and look without interrupting the movement of others interested in the free standing or hanging artefacts. (fig 2)

At Louisbourg the reconstruction extends not only to artefacts but to a complete 18th century French fortress! Fort Louisbourg was built originally to protect the mouth of the St Lawrence River and adjoining fisheries from marauding English. It was captured in 1745 but shortly afterwards returned to the French under peace terms negotiated in Europe. During the revived struggle in the 1750s the British recaptured the fortress and it was demolished in 1760.

The fortress remains were eroded by weather and builders' merchants who carried stones to as far away as Halifax and Boston. By 1928 little remained except a series of grassy mounds which were designated a 'National Historic Site' by the Canadian Government.

Fig 1

In the 1960's a team of miners (from the Cape Breton Coal Industry), archaeologists, historians, draughtsmen, architects and interpreters came together to plan the reconstruction. The eventual scheme is attempting to re-build the fortress as it looked in 1745 at the height of its importance as a coastal commercial centre. The buildings have been constructed of timber and stone using original and modified crafts to help re-capture the atmosphere. It is hard to imagine that the adze marks on the roof timbers are genuine but the effect is convincing. When completed it is intended that the visitor should experience an environment so detailed that history will become a participatory activity.

Louisbourg is reputed to have been an unpopular posting because of the cold, damp foggy climate. On the day we were there the place was enclosed in a heavy

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Fig 2
Inside the Bell Museum - National Historic Park, Baddeck, Nova Scotia

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mist which provided an authentic setting for our visit.

The car parks and reception building are some distance from the fortress. The polished wood, glass and carpeting provide an impressive contrast to the straw, wood and pewter starkness to be met later. After paying the two dollars entrance fee you walk down through the building along a broad, curved, carpeted slope on to which face, in sequence, six screens with continuously running French/English tape/slide programmes. These use artists' impressions of the earlier life at Louisbourg and supplement the models and historic paintings displayed in the lobby were you wait for the transport to the fort entrance. This is about two miles from the reception building and although a twentieth century bus is out of character it served its purpose and after unloading quickly disappeared in the mist. Passengers were received by interpretive staff who used a scale model to explain the layout of the fortress and dealt with any questions. Anna Bagnell was supervising the interpreters in June. She explained how teams of students and others are recruited each summer to take the part of those who lived there in 1745. Dossiers are compiled for each character detailing everything from clothing to life style and participants are expected to behave as if they were actually living in the 18th Century.

This scheme is not unique by any means but it was my first encounter with a clay-pipe-smoking garrison engineer. I joined other visitors to his house, chatted to his servants and drooled in the kitchen whilst his cook prepared the goose for Sunday dinner. Unfortunately we did not have time to have an 18th Century meal at the inn but the bakery was selling cannon balls disguised as bread made to an original recipe.

In addition the clothing is all intended to be hand-made from natural materials and dyes. The ill-fitting uniforms of the garrison soldiers are all part of the design. (fig 3) Low ranks are expected to go unwashed and unshaven, and act in a coarse manner.

This puts the visitor in an unreal situation. Can he believe and accept what he sees and hears - becoming part of the illusion, or does he dismiss it as nonsense and become offended by his treatment? There is scope here for many interesting socio/psychological

Fig 3
Eighteenth Century French soldier and 20th Century Canadian visitor

studies but perhaps for the present it is sufficient to report that the soldier we met was reticent. He had apparent difficulty explaining his job and we felt placed in a gap between reality and illusion. Then he wiped his nose on his sleeve and we knew - we had become 18th century visitors dressed in authentic 20th century clothes. The spell of Louisbourg had worked. We had become part of the history and the objective had been achieved.
Stan Frost

Notts Plan

TO DATE

Readers will recall that the Countryside Commission's sponsored project to produce an Interpretive Plan for Nottinghamshire started in the autumn of 1976. A first Draft Interpretive Strategy was presented to the project steering group early in January 1978. There will also be a final report submitted to the Commission giving details of how the project as a whole was carried out, the results obtained and the conclusions relevant to other counties; this will incorporate Part II of the Strategy. (Preparing the Plan was one of several aims, which include the stimulation of provision, the promotion of co-operation and the dissemination of results).

STRATEGY PART I

When the Strategy itself is revised for final production, it will be in two parts. The first half is aimed at bodies and agencies interested in promoting interpretive facilities in the county. It covers Interpretation and its aims, principles and uses. The greater part of the document provides a framework against which potential providers can judge their ideas. In effect, the inventory of resources is interpreted, with information on help and advice available, existing and planned interpretation, possible sites and so on. Management policies, priorities and the people for whom the interpretation would be are discussed. It suggests a series of themes (topics of national, regional and local importance, and general subject areas) through which the character of the county can be explained, and gives detailed proposals as to how these particular themes could be interpreted.

STRATEGY PART II (INTERIM)

The second half of the Strategy for Nottinghamshire is aimed at decision makers within the major agencies involved in interpretive provision. It contains two types of propsal. The first is a proposal for new services which would help improve existing, and stimulate new, provision, and aid co-ordination of the plans of the different providers. The second type of proposal is for a better organisation of responsibilities for interpretation at county and regional level.

PUBLICATION AND FUTURE

Although the strategy refers to Nottinghamshire, and the responsibilities for interpretation are different in every county, this does not mean that the findings and proposals should not be relevant elsewhere. It is hoped to launch its publication in September; the Countryside Commission have agreed to extend the project until September 1979 which will enable the Project Officer to promote the report and follow up queries.
Ruth Tillyard, Project Officer

Exmoor Plan

PROGRESS REPORT

With one more year to go of the Exmoor Interpretive Plan Project the first draft of the Plan is now being written. Based on the first year's research and the second year's consultations on the strategy that should be adopted, it will be a guide, for those engaged in interpreting Exmoor, on what to say and where to say it. Decisions to implement any of the proposals will then require local or site plans governing how to say it.

Interpretation in Exmoor needs to be aimed at local people as much as visitors and further to this, the involvement of local people and organisations in the interpretation of Exmoor to visitors will have benefits both in local goodwill and in financial savings. In this situation the Plan needs to be an instrument that will co-ordinate effort to give a composite picture of Exmoor. There is also a need for the Plan to encourage a high standard of interpretation.

In December, a study day entitled *Understanding Exmoor* was held at the National Park Headquarters in Dulverton. Representatives of some 23 organisations attended and heard an introduction to interpretive planning by Geoff Stansfield. They were introduced to the Project by a pre-circulated discussion paper and an illustrated presentation.
Terry Robinson, Project Officer

THE STOKE REPORT

WINTER CONFERENCE - THE POTTERIES

We gathered at the appropriately named Clayton Lodge Hotel in Newcastle-under-Lyme for this conference. After supper we squeezed into the residents' lounge for Geraint Jenkins to introduce to us David Sekers, Director of the Gladstone Pottery Museum, who had organised the whole weekend.

He in turn introduced us to Eric Hambrook, the City's Director of Technical Services who gave us the background to the area, its appalling problem of dereliction and the efforts made to improve the environment through a vigorously-pursued programme of reclamation. He described Stoke as being the 'Shangri-la' of industrial archaeology, and his efforts have been directed at changing the *character* as little as possible, while providing the people of the city with completely new, clean and tidy, surroundings.

TOURISM IN STOKE

The morning session was started by David Sekers, who said that Stoke is attracting more tourists now, and the reason is probably because the ordinary person is interested in seeing a real working situation. Several of the larger firms had provided a comprehensive visitor service; we would look at two different solutions, Wedgwood and Minton.

Paul Atterbury, the curator of the Minton museum, showed us, in the hotel, a film about Minton made for TV about 1972. It showed in documentary style, the history of Minton, and described the different processes that had been used to make pots and all manner of decorative ware.

Printed marks, c.1850–70, found on high-quality earthenware and porcelain

We boarded the coach and drove through crisp, sparkling scenery to the Minton factory in the centre of Stoke. Unimposing outside, the 1930s style hallway, constructed in the 1950s ("Stoke is always 20 years behind!") was rather splendid. Down in the depths was a nicely-presented collection of Minton ware. Unfortunately, we did not have this complemented by the living aspect of the factory tour, and being able to watch and talk to the potters.

The coach then took us to Wedgwood's greenfield site, set up with farsightedness in 1940 using the new techniques available. To cope with their 75,000 visitors a year, they opened a new visitor centre two years ago, to complement the shop and cafeteria opened four years ago, which will soon be extended. In the comfortable cinema a short film illustrated the quality of Wedgwood and its tradition, and how these appeal to all sorts of people. The museum in posh surroundings was conducive to admiration of the pottery, but one had to turn to the museum guide to find out anything. We then went past the demonstration hall where on weekdays there would normally be people working to show the different stages in pot-making, and on into the shop and cafeteria.

IN THE CLUB

With the gentlemen in suitable dress, we were deemed smart enough to qualify for a marvellous buffet lunch in a private room in another 1950s building, this time with plush Louis XIV decor inside, where we also had the opportunity for a passing glimpse at some pottery bosses. The British Ceramic Manufacturers' Federation were our hosts in their singularly imposing club.

ON TOUR

The remainder of the afternoon was devoted to a tour of the Potteries led by the Chief Planner, John Cornell, and by David Sekers. We saw many of the reclamation schemes for which Stoke has become famous, and gained an overall impression of existing characteristics. We saw a future scheme at Chatterley-Whitfield, where the coal-mine has been retained for recreational visits. We stopped at three important places.

The first was the junction of the Caldon Canal with the Trent and Mersey Canal, where several buildings are being presented, one of them an old bone-grinding works (bone goes into pottery), complete with beam engine. A short walk along the canal brought us to what David Sekers described as a "holy place", the site of Wedgwood's original Etruria works, with the canal over 12' above its surroundings because of subsidence, and none of the original buildings left except for a small round house whose use is now unknown.

Next was Hanley Forest Park - a large area where we walked over what had once been a colliery waste yard, admired the lake, counted the saplings, looked at the two tips, one 'reclaimed', the other left to revegetate naturally, and wondered slightly how long it would take to look like a forest.

Finally, we had tea in Burslem Town Hall, now cleaned up and converted into a Leisure Centre, and looked at the environmental improvement scheme carried out on the market square area as part of *Operation Eyesore*. The town trail showed us this, and how closely

Old Town Hall Burslem opened Jan. 28th. 1857

the streets compared with those used by Arnold Bennett in his "Bursley".

THE GLADSTONE MUSEUM

Our first taste of the Gladstone Museum was a splendid candlelit Staffordshire supper - Lobby (broth), Tamworth Pork and Trentham Tart. Peter Gatacre, once director of Madame Tussaud's, gave a punchy after-dinner talk which left many members quite punch-drunk. It is printed in full elsewhere in the newsletter.

Introducing his museum the following morning, David Sekers said that we had not really had a clear look at interpretation of the industry as a whole, partly because it was the weekend. The Gladstone, as a working museum, shows more of technique than history. We saw a TV documentary which showed how the industry had undergone its major revolution within the last 30 years with the changeover from smokey bottle-kilns to electric furnaces. The Gladstone and its contents have thus only become museum items within the last few years.

He explained that the Museum has four parts: buildings, workshops, galleries and services. The buildings are of typical style, with Palladian facade on the street, an archway through to the yard where the raw materials were brought before being distributed to the various workshops, and bottle ovens

surrounding this. The workshops, with their original fittings, and volunteer craftsmen when the museum is open, show how pottery is made. There are several galleries; the main one gives a brief and interesting history of the industry as a whole, and there is temporary exhibition space also.

TYING UP THE THREADS

As we consumed coffee and oatcakes (Staffs style), bought by those who went on a lightning tour of Longton to see more of its buildings and history, the discussion was introduced by Geraint Jenkins, who also thanked David Sekers for his organisation of the weekend.

The relevance to our visit of having the planning aspects explained in such detail was questioned. It was agreed, however, that we did need to be given the background. Many local authorities try to improve poor environments too

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hurriedly, without fully knowing how. Stoke was perhaps a case in point, although the enthusiasm shown was a good thing, and people had benefitted, especially children. The reaction of the locals is to take the reclamation for granted and not really understand the fame it has brought.

Now that we can be less ruthless and more thoughtful about destruction we should not remove all the old buildings around the Gladstone, but leave a few to give the context. There is a case for an industrial improvement area.

There was some criticism of the Wedgwood Visitor Centre, with the museum lacking any interpretation, the film hard-selling, the demonstration area replacing the real thing and the poor display. However, Wedgwood, in an expensive but highly professional way, achieve their objective of selling and we should be able to learn from them. The only slight criticism of the Gladstone was the visitor movement, but David Sekers explained that the buildings imposed limitations, and that circulation was bad even when the pottery was in full-scale production.

BOAT TRIP

The final attraction was an informal journey to Barlaston on a canal barge. We ate, drank and chatted, and marvelled at the shiver of the icesheet ahead, the variety of noises produced as the boat ploughed its way through, and the valiant steering of the bargee.
Ruth Tillyard

DIRECTORY

Graphic Partners (Kenneth Craig, Graham Duffy and Fred Littlejohn) have moved again, this time to 29 Hanover Street, Edinburgh, EH2 2DL; telephone (unchanged) 031-226 7033.

Michael and Betty Quinion have moved from Chippenham to: 12 Baker's Furlong, Burghill, Hereford HR4 7SB; telephone Hereford (0432) 760092

Michael H. Glen has left the British Tourist Authority to join the Food, Drink and Tobacco Industry Training Board in Gloucester. While the links with heritage interpretation are not immediately obvious, he is prepared to continue editing the newsletter *pro tem*. All correspondence should be addressed to him at 7 Tilbury Wood Close, Downley, High Wycombe, Bucks until 24th May, and thereafter at Ryeford Lodge, Ryeford, Stonehouse, Glos. (Business telephone, 0452 28621.)

Avebury Great Barn

A centre for the study and interpretation of past Wiltshire life.

In our last report, readers will remember that to put the Great Barn and its adjoining buildings into a good state of repair was the first priority. I am pleased to record that restoration work at the west end of the barn was begun with a directly employed labour force of 3 men in October last year. This work on the barn's gabled hip has allowed the Society to qualify for its grant from The Civic Trust.

In the Society's Appeal for the sum of £85,000 required to complete all phases of the project, £15,000 has so far been raised. Applications to a number of charitable organisations have been made and further grants are hoped for.

Although the main barn will not have displays mounted until 1979, some temporary displays will be set up in the former stable block attached as a south wing to the barn. The displays will be on view from this Easter and their themes will include country craftsmen and their tools, past agricultural techniques and pre-war (1939-45) village life at Avebury in the form of early village photographs. The barn itself will also be on view to the visitor who should be able to see restoration work progressing.

Anyone interested in obtaining further information about the Society's Appeal should write to one of the Society's Appeal Secretaries, either Mrs June Buckley, Barnacle House, Coate, Nr Devizes, Wilts SN10 3BR, or H Monty Trethowan Esq, 7 New Street, Salisbury, Wilts.
Lance Vatcher, Honorary Director

Portsmouth's Plans

Unusually for a Museum Director, I have a specific responsibility for all ancient monuments within the City. Many of these lie within the old town of Portsmouth which, until the 1860s, was encircled by a complex system of 17th century defences.

Together they form an important historic asset and although the City Council has put a large amount of resources into their restoration, since the last war not a great deal of attention has been given to their interpretation. They are also the focal point of a system of defences which reflect the development of fortifications from Roman times to the present day and which, geographically, embraces the whole of the Solent area.

In order to develop a basis on which a local interpretive plan could be considered, the Dartington Amenity Research Trust was asked in April 1977 to undertake a preliminary study. Their report was received in January and approved in principle by the City Council. The cost of this study was largely borne by the Southern Tourist Board.

It envisages a detailed study leading to a report containing:
a) an appraisal of themes and resources in, and related to, Old Portsmouth;
b) a detailed outline, with options as necessary, of actions which the City Council might take to secure the conservation, public use and interpretation of historic resources in its charge or might encourage other bodies to take, within, and closely related to, Old Portsmouth;
c) a broader outline of the implications for action by other bodies - in the fields of tourism, recreation, interpretation etc - in a wider area.

A fund-raising effort is currently in hand but it is hoped to commission this second report in May for completion early in 1979. In my view, this provides an unparalleled opportunity in this country to apply interpretive planning and techniques to a vitally important but complex urban historic area.
Richard Harrison, Portsmouth City Museums

Panel Problems

Interpretation by explanatory on-site panels poses a dilemma for the Norfolk Heritage Project - how best to reconcile the wish to interpret a feature with the wish not to mar the scene

At some sites there is little problem. An existing public park for instance, or the interior of a windmill already much visited by the public, are not likely to be visually harmed by an interpretive panel. But what about a lonely ruined abbey, or quiet riverside spot where a ferry used to cross? And can one single panel design be appropriate for such widely differing sites? After all, one may be placed among rural greenery, another fixed to the soft red brick of an old barn, and a third in a busy street.

Roger Flatt, our Designer, had hoped that a white enamelled frame with subdued green inserts for the text would be acceptable in most situations. Certainly we wanted our panels all to have the same recognisable format. But tastes differ - the tastes of Planning Officers, of site proprietors, of one's financial sponsors, of the visiting public.

This summer we will have placed some fifty panels. How many can a county carry (Norfolk is made up of some seven hundred civil parishes) before members of the public start to cry *Oh, no! Not another one of those!* This seems to be a problem even more difficult than that of designing an outdoor panel that is weather-proof as well as inexpensive.
Andrew Pierssene

ENVIRONMENTAL LIVING

During May 1976 Terry Stevens undertook a six-week study tour of US and Canadian parks, reviewing interpretive programmes and their organisation.

INTRODUCTION

After such a trip the head swims with the many exciting experiences and developments encountered and worthy of recording. This is particularly true when the countries visited have such dedicated, enthusiastic interpreters who are willing to show bold invention and innovative thinking in their interpretive programmes.

This willingness exists not simply because of available financial resources; indeed the present stringent economic conditions mean just the opposite. Instead it is a genuine open-mindedness continuously fired by a healthy dialogue with others involved in the business of communications.

Many of the more recent American experiences have been well documented, and the increasing availability of American interpretive publications in Britain gives us little excuse for not having read them. There is, however, one aspect of this experience which has so far received scant attention, yet it appeared to be both tremendously exciting and effective. It also appears to have many potential applications to the British environment. The project in question is *Environmental Living*.

WHAT'S HAPPENING?

Experiencing - doing - understanding, that's what's happening in the Environmental Living Programmes (ELP) organised by the US National Park Service and various State Parks and Recreation Departments. Essentially these programmes involve students of *all* ages, giving them an opportunity to simulate life in a different environment or a different period in history, recreating the time or culture of their choice. Since 1969, such opportunities, under the title of ELP, have developed in a variety of National, State and even some private parks primarily in Arizona and California.

As the name implies, *Environmental Living* is an actual living experience, generally overnight, currently offered in a diverse range of cultural, natural, historical and prehistorical settings. The project invokes the old adage: *I hear and I forget, I see and I remember, I do and I understand.* The basic concept being survival, as the NPS handbook explains: "Students learn how a particular culture, at a particular point in time, survived. They then use this information to prepare for their own survival for a day, recreating the culture or era they have studied." In turn this learning experience aims to prompt a deeper understanding of today's environments, by developing an awareness of, appreciation for and understanding of past social and natural environments. Ambitious indeed!

GETTING THERE

The first stage of the ELP sees the interested teacher applying to the site of his/her choice. At present the list of participating parks is not extensive, but is considerably varied: a pioneer cabin in Arches National Park; aboard the lumber schooner, the *C.A. Thayer* in San Francisco Bay; a 19th century defence, Fort Point in San Francisco; a pioneer fort near Sacramento; or a

Miwok Indian Village in the Point Reyes area.

Having been successful in their application, the teachers are expected to prepare a detailed plan of their intended visit selecting the historic period and the objectives of their live-in, etc. Now begin the essential months of preparation in and out of the classroom, with the students studying the people, the culture and the resultant lifestyles of their chosen period. Pre-live-in visits are a fundamental aspect of this preparatory work enabling the kids to 'get a feel' for the place and to use Strand and Role Cards and other resource material. Normal background work continues ... Who lived there?... What did they eat? ... What were their laws?... Library research may be supplemented by guest speakers and the development of various skills.

This pre-EL period also sees the development of a rapport between the class and its assigned park ranger. The children now begin to investigate the various potential roles that they may assume. These are identified and work groups organised. Then, in the month prior to the visit the teacher attends a workshop session at the site, which closely reflects the live-in itself, meeting staff, assuming role playing, experiencing the site and so on.

The final physical preparations see the development of duties, provisions, safety, budgeting and menu lists, and of course the acquisitions of provisions etc. Anything forgotten remains forgotten; the kids have to adapt when on site. Everything should now be ready. The visit begins during the late afternoon and lasts for up to 24 hours. During this period it is the kids' experiences which count, whether it has been as a cook on the *C.A. Thayer*, a night guard at Fort Point, a Sutter himself at Sutter's Fort, they maximise the use of old or handmade equipment whilst minimising the use of twentieth century conveniences. The various groups work on site at their tasks and a *community* feeling between the groups is encouraged. In the evening appropriate entertainment may be forthcoming with songs, dances, skits which depict the chosen era.

WHAT THEN?

Post-visit evaluation is possibly the most crucial and undoubtably the most elusive activity, but in order to achieve the programmes' full potential, teachers, students and park staff must evaluate their ELP experiences. It is a difficult but necessary task, but, however, there are several indicators which go some way to assess the success of this venture. Firstly, the programmes offered are all fully booked for over 12 months in advance. Secondly, just a few minutes in the company of any park personnel, teacher or student involved in an ELP is enough to convince one that the scheme was worthy of further investigation. Finally, a glimpse at the mountain of mail in the office of Charlie Hawkins, the Fort Point Supervisor, from excited staff and students, must be reward in itself. Perhaps the ELP is best summarised by a teacher in one of these letters: "So why do we do it? What good is it? Does it teach you anything? Like - determination? invention? improvisation? foresight? hindsight? love? art? music? religion? strength or patience or tolerance or accuracy or quickness or which wood will burn, how long is a day and how far is a mile...? And how to rely on yourself? A most rewarding experience."

To assist those interested in participating in an ELP each park produces relevant teachers' packs and the NPS an ELP package consisting of 4 superb booklets. (Countryside Commission take note.) These are available from the US Government Printing Office, Washington DC 20402, USA.

In addition inspection copies are available from Terry Stevens, Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority, Haverfordwest. Tel: 3131 ext 138. A full report of the American Study Tour is also available from him.

The author gratefully acknowledges the financial assistance of the Winston Churchill Memorial Trust who made the trip possible, and the co-operation of his employers - Dyfed County Council.

A WATERY APOLOGY

In the last newsletter, I stated that the Mill at Cotehele was not powered by the waterwheel. In fact what I (and others) took to be the source of power was an electric generator quite unconnected with the machinery but in the same room. A case for more interpretation?
Ruth Tillyard

BOOKSHELF

INTERPRETING THE CONSERVED ENVIRONMENT: Issues in Planning and Architecture. (Working Paper No. 29) by Brian Goodey. Oxford Polytechnic, Department of Town Planning, 1977.

Goodey, in introducing his paper, describes it as a *message* paper, advocating a broadening of our view of conservation, and leading, he hopes, to discussion. It was based on a paper concerned with cognitive and behavioural research in environmental issues - a field Goodey knows well. To this he has added further thoughts on interpreting the conserved environment.

Until recently (EAHY, 1975), all the weight of interpretive theory, and much of the practice, has been channelled into rural, ie 'countryside' activities. Goodey feared a backlash against urban conservation (and, by extension) interpretation after the exposure during EAHY, and his paper is, in part, an armament against any 'sweeping under the carpet' of issues highlighted three years ago.

He traces the conservation movement in Britain, and the policies that are practised; attitudes to conservation are explored, and the embracing of it by educationalists is discussed. In examining the social and psychological aspects of conservation, Goodey restates the view that 'one of the greatest hindrances we have to change or modify in the light of new needs is the weight of professionalised and institutionalised administration.' He feels that conservation efforts in Britain are already hampered in this way and yet, he admits, his own conclusions in the final chapter, *Towards a Broader View of Conservation*, demand more co-ordination of effort. Even in encouraging new thought, he fears an inevitable increase in bureaucracy.

This is a meaty - and some times heady - paper. It demands - and rewards - careful reading. It doesn't always avoid academic 'trips' but they are excursions rather than regular journeys. It is, after all, a paper aimed principally at an academic audience.
MHG

MANUAL FOR MUSEUMS by Ralph H Lewis. National Park Service, 1976.

The foreword to this 412-page book states *Among the most important contributions the National Park Service has made since its founding in 1916 has been the extraordinary museum technology and administration.* Part of their policy guidelines also states *Museums shall be developed, maintained and operated in areas administered by the National Park Service when they are required for the preservation of original objects important to the parks or are needed in the interpretation of the parks.*

Collections of objects form a vital element in the NPS. Many parks and historic sites have them, but frequently they are run by small staffs without the specific skills required to administer a museum. Nevertheless, the NPS has always aimed at achieving high standards of curatorship.

The author of the Manual, now retired, has had a long and outstanding career as a museum administrator and curator in the Park Service. Any museum curator from the UK who has visited the NPS as I did in 1967 will have reason to be grateful for his width of experience and understanding of the problems.

This is very much reflected in the Manual. It is an essentially practical, down-to-earth guide to *do-it-yourself* curatorship, aimed at a very specific readership, and it is most important that it be read and used as such. As such, it is a must for anybody with responsibility for collections, particularly those without direct contact with well-staffed museums. Professional curators in this country might dismiss parts of it as being too basic and even naive, but its great attraction to me is the fact that it gets down to the real *nitty-gritty* of cataloguing, storage, care of collections and buildings, protection of exhibits, etc.

The Manual is divided into four parts - *Museum collections, Museum records, Furnished historic structure museums and Exhibit maintenance and replacement.*

There are nine appendices relating to such matters as law, safety and standards, but they do relate specifically to American law and practice.

Most successful in my view are those parts of the book dealing with basic problems like housekeeping. Part 3 contains a long chapter devoted to all aspects of the day-to-day care of historic structures, covering staffing, routines, equipment, materials and the special requirements of specific areas, eg, floors, gilded wood. There is also a very valuable chapter on protecting exhibits.

Display and Interpretation are two of the fortes of the NPS and they deservedly get special attention, including personal interpretation, both in the context of formal museums and of historic structures. However, it is a pity there are not more illustrations in these chapters.

The Manual is crammed full of tried and proved practical ideas; nevertheless I believe it is a pity that it does not relate more than just a few to fundamental museological philosophy - *why* as well as *how*. Perhaps it is asking too much, bearing in mind the function of the Manual, and it has to be said that it maintains a good balance between too little information on specific techniques and too much in those areas such as conservation where specialist help should be sought. Nevertheless, I would question the inclusion of one or two of the conservation techniques and the chapter on disposal does not give sufficient stress to the importance of assessing the scientific or historical significance of surplus material.

Museum material is now being used in this country in many situations other than in museums. This book forms an invaluable aid to all concerned and should be available to all staff from the head to the caretaker/attendant, and many of my museum colleagues could also benefit a great deal from it.
Richard Harrison

EXPLORING COUNTRY CRAFTS by J. Geraint Jenkins. EP Publishing Ltd, 1977.

There can be few people with a more personal knowledge - and understanding - of the work of rural craftsmen than the Society's Chairman, Geraint Jenkins. In this latest book, he has taken a dozen crafts that have played - and in many cases still play - a vital role in providing for the community's needs or in producing what would be called in big business, merchandisable goods.

In describing each craft, the author weaves a tapestry that illustrates its history, its geographical distribution (in England and Wales), its significance in the pattern of industrial development or social need and the ways and means of production. So often are added the names of craftsmen from the past or present - many of them known to Jenkins - and it is this personal involvement which not only makes his book fascinating to those new - or not so new - to the subject but also gives it an authority and authenticity.

For the layman and for the generalist in the field of interpreting our craft history, this will be another valuable addition to the bookshelf. The specialist will enjoy comparing notes. MHG

Roundabout Review

"Did you receive one of these in the post, Dougal?" asked Florence, waving a copy of the Countryside Commission's Advisory booklet No 2 on *Interpretive Planning* in the air. "Yes, a classic to be sure," said Dougal carefully folding pages 5 and 6, as his new paper dart took shape. "A classic? A classic what?" questioned Florence. "Yeah man," responded Dylan, "What I mean is ... Well, I thought these here interpretive guys were supposed to be really into communicating, man."

"Some try!" said Ermintrude, recently returned from a farm Open Day in West Wales. "I think it's meant to be read by those freaks not yet aware of what's involved," chorused Dylan, "I mean it's hardly mind-blowing stuff for us tuned-in addicts." "Perhaps you're right, but that's my whole point," pleaded little Florence, "if it's of no use to you who is supposed to read these words of wisdom?" "Hey, man, that's what Moses thought!" quipped Dylan. "But at least he was trying to say something new and refreshing. He was also really imaginative, presenting his ideas in a novel way." argued Florence.

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"It's called media, man!" admonished Dylan, quickly adding, "but were those stones ever heavy to lug around?" and chuckling to himself. "They did the trick though; they made people take notice of them - even those who had previously scorned, and had laughed at his new ideas. Many became converted and not only practised the laws, but preached them to others," explained Florence. "Yeah! Yeah! Yeah!" beatled Dylan.

All this time Ermintrude had been nibbling away at the grey covers, tempted to taste the delicacies between them which looked vaguely appealing. In disgust however, she complained, "how dry!"

Meanwhile Brian the Snail was trying his hand at the new game on page 14. Moving slowly away from *Why?* (which he though must mean the same as *Go* on his *Monopoly* board), Brian took ages trying to avoid *How* which must be the equivalent of *Take a Chance*, he thought to himself. Totally confused he called for the others to help him.

"Oh, I wish these *specialists* wouldn't remain anonymous," whispered Florence. "Oh I can't blame them," said Dougal, philosophically. "We need some more aid," called Dylan, fumbling with his SIBH Newsletter. "First Aid?" chuckled Dougal.

As they searched for inspiration in the reading list gloom settled over them as it became clear that some people really do believe that the only useful reading on anything emanates from somewhere in deepest Gloucestershire.

"Try the back of a box of matches, they may help" assisted Bryant, (sorry, Brian). "That's enough!" said Florence firmly. "Yawn! Time for bed!" said Zebedee.

(Apologies from Terry Stevens to the Magic Roundabout - of course).

MEMBERSHIP

It has not been possible to produce, as promised, a membership list with this issue of the Newsletter. It will appear with Issue 10, after the AGM in April.

CAPITAL CHANCE

INTERPRETATION OPPORTUNITY FOR EDINBURGH

Society members gathered in Edinburgh for last year's annual conference were surprised and disappointed to find that a city with such a wealth of history and architecture to offer visitors should present its offering in such a haphazard way; there is no starting point where the visitor can obtain an overall picture of the City, discover how it has developed and the way it works today, before setting off to explore the closes of the Royal Mile and the elegant streets of the Georgian New Town. In fact, for want of overall guidance, many visitors miss the delights of the residential New Town altogether, although it must be the largest conservation area in Britain, and few indeed penetrate other historic areas such as Leith and the South Side.

An interpretation centre with a skilfully compiled exposition of Edinburgh as a whole is therefore urgently required. The ideal site for such a centre would be in the High Street (part of the Royal Mile) and near the existing tourist information centre (which fulfils a completely different purpose) on Waverley Bridge. Visitors to the TIC would then be encouraged to begin their exploration of the City at the interpretation centre which would also tap the heavy flow of visitors on the Castle - Holyrood beat.

An ideal building, with no present use, stands proudly at exactly the right spot on the High Street. It is of considerable architectural and historic importance (listed category A) and, while its exterior has just been beautifully restored by the City at a cost of £356,000, its interior is a complete void, giving maximum flexibility to the design of the centre.

The Tron Kirk has had a chequered career. Built by the king's master-mason for the Town Council in 1637-47, to house one of the three separate congregations ordered from St Giles' when Charles I decided to reinstate the latter as a cathedral, its completion was delayed by plague and political upheaval. In 1785 it was an early

victim of the road lobby when the east end was lopped off to allow the construction of the South Bridge, and the west was similarly treated in order to maintain symmetry. In the Great Fire of 1824 the charming Dutch steeple was burnt down, and subsequently replaced with the present stone spire which is such an important feature of the High Street. When the Kirk closed for worship in 1952 it narrowly avoided demolition in order to provide a site for a supermarket, and the cost of subsequent acquisition by the City, together with the cost of the recent external restoration for a building which still has no use, is a matter of great concern to councillors.

The gallery and all the other Victorian fittings were removed from the church during the restoration, so a new gallery will be required in order to make maximum use of the high, box-like interior and so that the splendid hammer-beam roof can be seen to best advantage. There are also access problems to be overcome. One solution, using a helical gallery, has already been produced for the City Architect, but this scheme was abandoned because insufficient thought has been given to the way in which the building would be used. Before any further design work is done it is essential to engender some civic enthusiasm for the concept of the Tron Visitors' Centre, and then for interpreter and architect to work together so that the new interior is designed with the display. Only when the possibilities have been worked out in some detail will it be time to consider how the project should be financed, but as Edinburgh has more visitors than any UK city outside London, public or private investment in an interpretation centre comparable to that at St Mary's Castlegate, York, should not be hard to justify.

Oliver Barratt

TO THE EDITOR...

NORTH DEVON MUSEUM COMPLEX

The publication in the Newsletter of the paper given by Geraint Jenkins at the Devon Conference is welcome. Among the many good points in it is the argument that a facility should be provided because there are good ecological or historical reasons for doing so rather than because there already happens to be tourist pressure at a particular place. He is rightly critical of unco-ordinated do-it-yourself schemes which owe more to a propensity for jumping on bandwagons than to an informed assessment of what really needs doing; and he very properly suggests that the first step in north Devon should be the appointment of a project officer to look at the whole region and produce a development plan.

However, I am sorry that he is pessimistic about a central museum complex for north Devon being developed at Barnstaple in the foreseeable future. It is certainly needed - given that it would not be merely a place 'where material objects are held up to view' - and the case for it should be pressed accordingly. As north Devon is a Development Area, perhaps the project could be presented as making a valuable contribution to the promotion of tourism and so deserving of financial aid; but in any case, elsewhere in Britain as well as here, the argument for greatly increased museum provision should now be stated with conviction and urgency,

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in view of the unprecedentedly thorough and rapid destruction of potential museum material that is going on.
F COTTRILL

SUSPICION AND CRITICISM

I must say, first, that I have come to grow suspicious of much of the discussion continued under the auspices of the term *interpretation*. Where the SIBH newsletter itself is concerned, I think that a lot of the notes, comments and summaries are often so abbreviated as to be worthless to someone starting afresh with the topic in question (as opposed to just recalling it or revising it), and in general I think that there is a 'clipped' tone to the newsletter which I find extremely off-putting. I feel that the newsletter has neither the usefulness of a compendium of information, nor the stimulative properties of a really vital journal. I would say that both of these features stemmed in part from a general vagueness about rules for the use of the term *interpretation*.

There's one aspect of the newsletter itself which I would like to comment on at greater length: this I think probably colours my opinions (as hinted at above) far more than it should. I happen to find the newsletter very unattractive physically - by which I mean what it does to the eyes as they scan the pages. I was puzzled by this feeling for a long time, until it finally dawned on me that it was caused by the extraordinary multiplicity of contrasting graphic styles.

Take, for example, the front page of Newsletter Seven (Summer 1977). On this page alone there is a total of ten different lettering types or uses. All this on an A5 page is too much, and extremely jarring to the conscious and unconscious visual reactions. Even as the newsletter progresses through its 24 pages, there are at least ten other lettering types to be encountered. I feel that a great improvement would be made if a greater harmonisation between a narrower range of graphic styles could be managed. It would make the newsletter much more attractive and easier to read.
ANDREW GUEST

FROM RUSSIA, WITH ADVICE

INTERPRETING TBILISI

Last October over 600 delegates, representing 74 countries, converged on Tbilisi, capital city of Georgia in the Soviet Union. They were there to attend the Unesco Intergovernmental Conference on Environmental Education thus completing the first major cycle in Unesco's two year programme to raise the level of environmental awareness among the world's people. The October Conference passed forty recommendations making up a standard against which countries can now measure their progress in creating an environmentally-responsible community. Despite all the expensive razzmatazz of international junketing, this programme could be one of Unesco's most important contributions to the survival of life on this planet.

Environmental interpretation as an important facet of environmental education was not specifically spelled out at the Conference. Nevertheless, it is implicit in such jargon-bound internationalese as Recommendation 1 which states, *Considering it is necessary to conserve the human and cultural heritage as well as the distinguishable features of civilisations ... every effort should be made to preserve these heritages, including the teaching of cultural heritage in environmental education.* A very general statement, you might say. But it provides the document for struggling environmentalists to point to as a fundamental *desideratum* in their countries. Of course, the other recommendations detail ways in which this might be achieved. For example, importance is given to the work of museums in developing an understanding of the environment.

RAMSHACKLE, POLYGLOT MACHINE

As with most other Unesco initiatives, the national Press has ignored this one, too. There almost seems to be a 'conspiracy of silence' surrounding it. That is unfortunate because, apart from the programme's intrinsic value to the environment, it is also worthy of notice as part of keeping an eye on what is happening to the ramshackle, polyglot Unesco machine whose good intentions get lost too easily in the bumbling complexities of bureaucracy. Surely it is time the Press sat up and took notice, and did some investigative journalism into the workings of Unesco? Unesco needs, and Tbilisi needs, interpreting to the public. Incidentally, should you want to be put in touch with the Unesco Environmental Education Programme then you can receive the newsletter, CONNECT, free from Unesco, 7 place de Fontenoy, 75700, Paris.

Tbilisi, once known as Tiflis, on the ancient trading route between Europe and India, is a fine city set on the side of a gorge in the Caucasian foothills. Snowcapped mountains distantly ring the view. How did the Russians set about interpreting the Georgian environment? By our standards, they did not! You had to work hard to find a map to buy, and that was in Russian and gave only general tourist information. Yet Tbilisi is one of the show places for all visitors to this part of the Soviet Union. Georgia is the home of St. George and the Dragon, and the place where Jason found the Golden Fleece. Its great antiquity is only equalled by its considerable agricultural wealth and fascinating variety of enviroments ranging from mediterranean-type warmth to high alpine grandure.

TOLERANT INDIFFERENCE

As so often happens, the best environmental interpreters were individuals with specialist knowledge that they were keen to communicate. Some members of the delegation were whisked off to an agricultural college where they were exhaustively informed! Georgia is in many ways more like a Southern European region than what one imagines to be typically Russian. Luxuriant vineyards produce excellent wine drunk in great quantities, and orange and lemon trees are everywhere luminous with fruit. Interpreting menus was always a great difficulty, and the waiter usually had a tolerant indifference towards helping out with a translation.

A visit to a school gave an impression of a warm-hearted staff working in a formal and efficient system. Many children spoke English quite fluently and spontaneously, and there was a delightful, unexpected impulsiveness in their behaviour. The Young Pioneers' Room suggested a martial quality to their education, however. An English lesson in progress was 'interpreting' Britain to the pupils by means of a 25-year-old film, grey with age, giving a perverse picture of the present reality. When this was queried, back came the reply, 'But isn't that how Dickens describes it?' On the other hand, the Shakespeare Centre in the University was an impressive powerhouse of knowledge about the plays and the bard. Tourist literature illustrating the Stratford area appeared difficult for the Centre to obtain, and the lecturers were hungry to hear English voices to get the accent right.

Tbilisi has grown in linear fashion alongside the Kura River. A nineteenth century boulevard, Rustaveli Prospect, makes up the administrative and cultural centre of the city opening out into the huge Lenin Square. Hereabouts are some prime examples of Stalin period architecture. At one end is the old town of close-packed houses with courtyards and balconies. The treelined narrow streets ramble under the shadow of Mount David. To my eye, it resembled a French North African city. Some of the older houses are being restored. Ornate churches celebrate the incense-perfumed Russian Orthodox religion. The modern suburbs ringing the city have sprouted egg box towers that could be anywhere. We were shown a fascinating open-air museum of vernacular architecture. Again there was a lack of tourist information. But these old wooden farmhouses were moving evidence of a world that has passed.

OMNIPRESENT REMINDER

Mount David is scaled by a funicular railway that ascends from a station built in Russian rococo. Up there, towering over the city, is a giant tin plate figure of the 'Mother of Georgia': an omnipresent reminder of the vastness of this great country.

The Russians could greatly improve their 'image', and earn more foreign currency, if they made a better job of

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interpreting Georgia to its visitors. I managed to pick up only one rather slight leaflet about tourist routes across Georgia. Tourist postcards are dull: the best for suggesting the 'flavour' of the Soviet Union were those on sale for home consumption, and commemorating the 60th Anniversary of the Revolution. However, Intourist worked hard at arranging a wide variety of cultural entertainment: displays of fiery Georgian dancing, singsongs in praise of the Soviet Union, classical concerts in converted churches, and a profoundly moving and superb performance of the aptly-chosen play, Bertholt Brecht's, 'Caucasian Chalk Circle'. We also saw the celebrated Georgian ancients, some well over a hundred years old.

The best interpretation of the visit that I saw was done by none other than fellow-delegate, Don Aldridge from Scotland's Countryside Commission, whose remarkable facility with pen and ink produced some hilarious, but telling, cartoons depicting only too acutely the buffoonery of international junketings, and the kind of environment in which this one was held. After much searching, I discovered the best books to have on hand if you go to Georgia are: V and J Louis *The Complete Guide to the Soviet Union.* Michael Joseph 1976, and D Marshall Lang *The Georgians.* Thames & Hudson 1966.

Keith Wheeler, Leicester Polytechnic

CIDER'S INSIDERS

Michael Quinion, recently-appointed to the new post of Curator of the Hereford Cider Museum Trust, has sent us this report of the Museum's development and the historical background.

The Hereford Cider Museum Trust has been set up by representatives of the cider industry in the County, to establish a much-needed Museum of the growth and development of the techniques of local manufacture.

The farm cider-making tradition of Herefordshire reached its peak in the 18th and early 19th Centuries. Cider and perry from the County was much prized. Local landowners took quantities to their London residences and challenged their sophisticated guests to tell the difference between Herefordshire Foxwhelp or Redstreak ciders and the best imported French wines. Often they couldn't. Local ciders were exported through Bristol to Ireland, Portugal, the East and West Indies and many other places.

Blockade during the Napoleonic Wars gave a great boost to local apple wines, but when trade was re-established a growing fashion for French grape wines caused a slow and serious decline in demand for cider. Orchards were neglected, the techniques of careful fermentation were abandoned, and pride in the tradition largely died. Cider acquired a reputation for poor quality.

It was only in the latter part of last century, when the researches of Pasteur and others had helped cider-makers understand the processes involved in fermentation, that the standard began to rise again, and interest in cider as a marketable product began to increase once more, after years of being regarded as a make-wage for the farm labourers. At the same time, the balance began to shift from production in small quantities on many hundreds of farms to centralised production in factory units using all the new skills acquired from a study of French wine-making techniques.

Cider's industrial revolution dates from about 1880 - something like a dozen cider works grew up around the City of Hereford. They slowly displaced the traditional farmhouse maker, who came to prefer to sell his apples and pears to the factories. But by the middle 1950s all but three of these cider works had gone in their turn - closed down or taken over. Today almost all Herefordshire's cider is made by one firm - Bulmers.

When I came to the Museum, I very quickly found that almost no systematic work had been done on the industry. A number of individuals had researched aspects of cider-making, and many people working in the industry or farming locally knew quite a bit about processes old and new, but nobody had ever collected their knowledge together. It is symptomatic that one can't buy a book or pamphlet in Hereford that deals with local tradition and methods.

So we arranged through the Job Creation Programme for four graduate researchers and an assistant to be recruited. They began work on 9th January and will spend the whole of the year systematically surveying the County's cider relics and finding the local people who know about the business.

Our first week's results startled everybody. We knew there were plenty of artefacts about: one cider-maker had told me "Herefordshire's just one big Museum", but we had no idea just how many there were. In one small parish, we found 16 cider mills and presses, dozens of casks, cider hairs, tubs and other items, and 15 old people with detailed memories of the way cider used to be made. If this is characteristic of the whole County, we will find and survey some thousand mills and presses and over a hundred purpose-built cider houses.

One of our special interests is the rise and fall of the modern cider works. For businesses so recently in existence, surprisingly little information is readily available about their techniques of production, their owners, even their dates of operation. We have been given all the cider-making equipment from one of these works and hope to re-establish a typical cider-making factory of the 1930s in the Museum.

The researchers are already becoming familiar with the nitty-gritty of field-work - walking miles up tracks unnavigable by cars to find a disused farm with cider-making associations; drinking gallons of tea and sometimes home-made cider in the interests of harmony; nodding wisely at all the old tales, freshly polished for their benefit (although the one about adding dead rats to the fermenting brew to improve the flavour is claimed to be true, even if the better farm cider-makers preferred best beefsteak!)

We are still in the earliest days of development - we have a site provisionally allocated, but much capital has to be raised and many decisions taken before we can even begin to assess in what final form the researchers' work will be shown to the public.

FRESH FIELDS?

INTERPRETATION OF ADVANCED TECHNOLOGY IN THE COUNTRYSIDE

Up till now, tourist attractions in the countryside have included scenic views, castles, nature trails, wildlife reserves, sandy beaches, outdoor sports facilities and wilderness areas. Recently, wayfaring courses, rural craft workshops, industrial archaeology, and numerous sophisticated visitor centres have been added to the list. Tourist Boards provide lists of factories and workshops open to the public, usually by prior arrangement.

Given the range of visitor interests, it is perhaps worth considering the possibility of adding modern technological developments in the countryside to the tourist itinerary. Such developments as dams, power stations, on-shore oil-related developments, and major industrial complexes increasingly tend to favour rural or coastal locations, benefits being perhaps land availability or deepwater facilities or segregation of potential hazards from main population centres. While their negative attributes - pollution, unsightliness, intrusion in the landscape - are usually stressed, little consideration is given to constructive possibilities: depicting the fascinating story of the technology, for instance, or its contribution to national well-being. Choice of a suitable theme, together with public safety aspects, are key considerations.

POWER IN THE HIGHLANDS

An interesting case study of interpretation of advanced technology to visitors is provided by the UK Atomic Energy Authority and the North of Scotland Hydro-Electric Board.

Since commissioning of the UKAEA Dounreay Fast Reactor (November 1959) a public exhibition centre just outside the establishment has been open to summer visitors. Working models, slides, brochures, photographs and displays describe the work of the Dounreay Nuclear Power Development Establishment and of the Atomic Energy Authority in general. In recent years the exhibition has been very popular,

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attracting 12,263 visitors in 1976 and 14,300 in 1977. Similar success has been enjoyed by the three main power stations of the North of Scotland Hydro-Electric Board which are open to the public on a regular basis: Pitlochry, Cruachan and Sloy. The Board are also actively considering the possibility of opening Foyers, on the banks of Loch Ness, to tourists, but it appears that this would be a long-term project. The table below summarizes details of the power stations open to the public:

CRUACHAN, open April-mid October: 45,000 visitors in 1976. Facilities: car park, picnic area, visitor reception centre, exhibition, literature, snack bar, minibus trips to power station (small charge), car convoys up to dam.

PITLOCHRY, open April-mid October: 300,000 visitors (estimate) to see dam, station and fish pass; 75,000 visitors in 1976 paid to see the exhibition. Facilities: car park, picnic areas, fish pass observation windows, exhibition, pamphlets.

SLOY, open June-August: no visitor data - opening to public is, so far, on an experimental basis. Facilities: car park; permanent exhibition is planned.

DOUNREAY, open May-September: 12,263 visitors in 1976; 14,300 in 1977. Facilities: car park, exhibition, literature.

UNTAPPED POTENTIAL

The growing importance attributed to sensitive environmental planning together with the growing number of contentious planning applications, has led to a situation where informed public participation and debate are important elements in the process. And well-designed visitor centres could be valuable in informing the public of the nature of advanced technology, its contributions to society, hazards and environmental impacts. Further benefit may be derived from the deflection of some tourist pressure from more sensitive widlife areas or plant communities.

David J Horner, Teaching Assistant, Department of Geography, University of Glasgow

Postal Course

INTERPRETING THE ENVIRONMENT - University of Washington Course

I read in the SIBH summer issue of this proposed correspondence course under the direction of Professor Grant Sharpe, author of the book of the same title, and Professor of Outdoor Recreation at the College of Forest Resources, University of Washington.

I received details of the course last October. Each assignment follows the chapters of Sharpe's book which is the basic textbook, supplemented by reading in the course manual. At the end of each assignment, there is an exercise which has to be returned to the University for marking. The course and the book are divided in several sections and the exercises vary from short written answers, true and false statements, to actual projects such as making up a talk, an exhibit or a trail. There are two supervised examinations, one midway through and one taken at the end of the course.

The cost of the course varies with the exchange rate. I paid approximately £75 including the return of assignments by airmail. Sharpe's book was extra at £11, from Landmark, Carrbridge. I certainly feel that I am getting value for money and that my job is already benefitting from the experience.

Full details of the Correspondence Course are available from Independent Study, 222 Lewis Hall, DW-30, University of Washington, Seattle, WA, 98195.
Anne-Mary Paterson.

The Tame Valley Show

Seven miles east of Manchester, the Tame Valley will be the subject of an exhibition in the week commencing 14th July, 1978, at Tameside Sea Scouts Headquarters on Lower Wharf Street, Ashton-under-Lyne. The exhibition, organised by the Civic Trust for the North West in collaboration with the Tameside Museums Department and the Tame Valley Warden Service, will tell the story of the valley's development. It will explain what physical, social and economic characteristics of the valley's history have led to the type of farming, industrial development and other land uses that can be seen in the valley today. To complement the main exhibition, local craftsmen and local firms are going to take part by providing demonstrations, photographic displays and exhibits of their products.

Intended for the general public and organised parties, like schools, the Tame Valley Exhibition is part of the urban fringe interpretive experiment being undertaken by the Civic Trust for the North West on behalf of the Countryside Commission. The experiment is exploring ways of promoting the public use of the valley which is being restored from a mucky backwater into a useful green and leafy asset for the local people.

For further details, please contact The Civic Trust for the North West, 56 Oxford Street, Manchester M1 6EU.
Gillian Brown

Good Shopkeeping

Sales outlets have, in terms of their revenue implications, become an important fact of life for most interpretive enterprises nowadays and it is sad to speculate that economic necessity has dictated their development. Important factors need to be considered before a sales facility is offered; the museum world for example has been bedevilled by a lack of commercial orientation in the past and the quality of merchandise in some interpretive schemes leaves much to be desired.

In November 1976 the Area Museum Service for the Midlands held a Shop Seminar at the Gladstone Pottery Museum to give consideration to some of the planning elements involved and their publication, which incorporates some of the seminar papers, is designed to give a wider view of the forum, particularly the educational aspects. The emphasis throughout the complete pack is to provoke thought as well as to try to answer questions, and hopefully to improve the standards of the merchandise.

The Midlands Area Shop Seminar Publication - papers relating to various views of the museum shop, museum shops in America and exhibition statements are included in a Report and pack of supporting material. Publication has been limited and, to avoid disappointment, immediate application should be made to Shop Publication, Midlands Area Service, Avoncroft Museum of Building, Stoke Prior, Bromsgrove, Worcs. The pack costs £2, plus £1 postage and packing.

D S Sorrell, County Museums Officer

POW AWARDS

Brian Lymbery has sent us details of the 31 awards made at the end of 1977 under the Prince of Wales' Scheme. Ranging from the restoration of a Roman amphitheatre to the conversion of an old docks warehouse into an industrial museum, many of the projects involved young people.

Mordunum Amphitheatre at Carmarthen, constructed in the second century, has been restored simply with a local primary school acting as custodians and at Pentre Llanrhaeadr, a derelict mill and outbuildings have been converted to form a domestic museum of country traditions and crafts. Swansea City Council have created an industrial museum, including a steam tug, at a former docks warehouse.

Birds feature in three schemes. At Connah's Quay Power Station a river estuary nature reserve has been created, and volunteers worked extensively to maintain access to Bardsey Island for birdwatchers. Near Cardiff, a young farmers' club helped a school for handicapped children in a 'bring back the birds project'.

The Forestry Commission provided Garwnant Forest Centre in a converted cowshed, and camp sites for walkers have been built by volunteers and community service youngsters in the Black Mountains. Margam Park has been opened to the public who can see the restored Orangery; a geological trail (including dinosaur models) has been established at Dan-yr-Ogof. Community and school projects involving small but imaginative schemes and local history have also been recognised. Full details are available from the Price of Wales' Committee, 15 Wellfield Court, Bangor, Gwynedd LL57 2BZ.

TAKE NOTE!

FOLLOW-UP TO GRAMPIAN INTERPRETIVE PLANNING WORKSHOP

Grampian Regional Council and the Countryside Commission for Scotland are to hold a re-call conference, for those involved in the Grampian Workshop, on 5 April 1978. The one-day conference will review reactions to the Workshop Report "Regional Interpretive Planning in Grampian", up-date members on relevant developments during the last 18 months, and explore ways of maintaining liaison in the future.

WALKS AND TALKS PROGRAMME

The annual series of walks and talks are a well developed feature of Pembrokeshire Coast National Park's overall interpretive package.

A total of 207 walks and talks were held last year attracting approximately 5,250 attendances.

Response to the programme over the past three years has been remarkably consistent. Average attendance figures inevitably conceal variations; the weather clearly influences visitor attendance, although comparison of figures for 1976 and 1977 - two very different summers in weather terms - seems to negate any suggestion that the weather is a factor responsible for any major variations in overall visitor totals between years.

INDUSTRY ± NATURE

The privately-circulated magazine of the Economic Forestry Group reprinted a Sunday Times article about the Group's wildlife manager in Eskdalemuir Forest. It gives a fascinating account of one man's efforts to balance the conservation of his trees with the conservation of the (predatory and non-predatory) wildlife. The predations are not only on other wildlife, but principally on trees and the control of one can have beneficial effects on the other. The interpretive element of Eskdalemuir Forest as an industrial operation in a natural environment has a high potencial interest - perhaps EFG might consider extending their private interests into the public eye?

UNIQUE ARBORETUM FOR HERTFORDSHIRE

After talks lasting two years and a feasibility study financed by the St Albans-based *Trees For People* Trust, the Thames Water Authority has agreed to the development of a unique arboretum at Maple Lodge, near Rickmansworth. Trees in Maple Lodge Park will be planted in groups representing the continents where they originate and there will also be facilities for bird-watching. The Trust hopes later to raise sufficient funds to establish on the site a "History of Trees" museum which would be the only one of its kind in Europe.

CONCENTRATING RESOURCES

As we went to press, the third report of the Nature Conservancy Council thudded through the letter-box. It is as interesting as it is weighty. On the interpretive side, the NCC are concentrating their limited resources on reserves where there are already large numbers of visitors or where they believe they can make provision for an increased number without risk to the special features in the reserves.

HERITAGE FOR A FIVER

In June of last year, as part of Heritage Education Year, a conference on *International Heritage* was organised by the British Tourist Authority at Woburn Abbey. The papers delivered by a distinguished group of British and European speakers have been published in a report of the proceedings, costing £5.00, plus 20p postage, and available from BTA, 64 St James's Street, London SW1A 1NF.

WADING IN...

Robin Wade Design Associates are as busy as ever. Major projects due for completion this year include a permanent exhibition at Hampton Court, and a Treasury for Canterbury Cathedral in its Norman crypt. Local history displays at Scunthorpe and an exhibition of the Life and Work of Thomas Bewick in Newcastle are under way and the conversion of the Great Warehouse at Coalbrookdale to become a new museum on ironmaking and the Darby family will be ready in Spring 1979. Hull will get phase III of the Maritime Museum and, across the Atlantic, work is progressing on design schemes for new museums at Saugus Ironworks (Boston) and Hopewell Village Ironworks (Philadelphia).

BRECON TREASURE HUNT

A short article in the interesting newsletter from the Brecon Beacons National Park describes a new treasure-hunt - not for precious metals, or precious stones, but for precious features of the Black Mountains. With the help of local people,

the Park staff want to record everything that gives character to the area - from castles to paving stones, old walls to hedgerows, pillar boxes to horse-troughs. We wish this pilot scheme good fortune - and happy hunting.

FARMING AND THE TOWNSMAN

Following a pilot project on farm open days, run during 1977 and decribed in the report *Family Day on the Farm*, £1, plus 20p postage, the Countryside Commission for Scotland has appointed a Project Officer to work for a three-year period on matters related to the general topic of *Farming and the Townsman*. When she takes up these duties on 1 March, Miss Jillian Walker will be returning to her native Perthshire after working for a time with Northampton County Council's Leisure Services Department. While there she gained experience of organising farm open days and this, together with the fact that she is a farmer's daughter, will stand her in good stead in her new post.

NEW COUNTRYSIDE WALKS FOR WEST MIDLANDS

Explore Your Countryside is a two-year experimental project devised by the Countryside Commission to help increase the enjoyment of visitors to West Midlands beauty spots. Some 1,000 guided walks will be staged to about 20 popular locations which have been chosen deliberately because they are well served by public transport and roads and because there are many ready-made facilities on hand.

In charge of the project is Society Member Andrew Jenkinson, Adult Education Tutor in Environmental Sciences with Salop County Council.

COASTAL PLANNING

The long-awaited publication of the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Plan has now arrived. This is available from the National Park Department, Old County Offices, Haverfordwest (price £2.00 plus 71p postage).

Also available are two well-produced site management plans for areas under National Park Authority ownership in the Park: *Poppit - A Management Plan* and *Manorbier - An Interim Management Plan*.

MORE ADVICE

Graham Taylor tells us that in the series of *Countryside Commission Advisory Booklets*, to add to the booklet on *Interpretive Planning*, they now have: *Farm Open Days* (just published), *Guided Walks* (at press), *Self Guided Trails*, *A-V Techniques*, *Visitor Centres* and *Interpretive signs* all to come.

MARINE INTERPRETATION

During 1977, the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority launched a project to establish marine interpretation facilities at the National Park's Countryside Unit and Information Centre in Broad Haven.

The basic structure of the new interpretive exhibition, complete with cold water aquarium, has been finished and work on the display material is coming along well. The audio-visual room has been completed and smaller works are all that remain to be done.

The project, funded by a special grant from the Countryside Commission as a contribution to Underwater Conservation Year 1977, is expected to be fully operational by Easter 1978.

In time for the 1978 season is a seashore pack for children, being prepared as a joint venture between the Authority and WATCH Trust, the junior arm of the Society for the Promotion of Nature Conservation.

CARDIFF MEETING

All members should have received full details of the forthcoming Cardiff Conference of the Society. Starting at midday on Friday 7 April, the first day's programme includes an opening address by Wynford Vaughan Thomas and a Medieval Banquet. The Saturday starts with Industry, moves to Food, then Forestry and ends at the National Museum. The Society's Annual General Meeting takes place on Sunday morning and the afternoon will be spent at the Welsh Folk Museum at St Fagans. Baroness White will address the closing session.

Accommodation will be at Llandaff House, Penarth. All applications for places should have been sent in by 1st March. Geraint Jenkins, the Society's Chairman, has organised the weekend, and should be contacted if any member wishes to be listed for a cancelled place.

COURSES

COURSE ON INTERPRETIVE PUBLICATIONS

The Countryside Commission for Scotland is to run a pilot course on publications in relation to interpretive provision, at Battleby, from 5-9 June 1978. The Course will be concerned with both principles and practice. It is designed for staff of parks and similar areas who need to develop a range of publications concerned with site interpretation. The emphasis will be mainly on production of inexpensive pamphlets. This is not a *lecture* course; members will be required to carry out a variety of practical exercises.

This course is planned as a follow-up to the Commission's Interpretive Planning Course, but some places are expected to be available for individuals who have not attended that course. The course is non-residential and those attending will be required to make their own accommodation arrangements. Further particulars can be obtained from Miss V M Thom, Interpretive Planning Officer, Countryside Commission for Scotland, Battleby, Redgorton, Perth PH1 3EW.

FIELD STUDIES

Adult courses at Kindrogan, the Scottish Field Studies Association's Field Centre at Enochdhu, Blairgowrie, Perthshire PH10 7PG, include, during March, May and June, *Spring Birds, Spring in the Highlands, Field Botany and Practical Photography.*

BEACONS FOR LEARNING

There is a wide range of courses organised at Danywenalt Study Centre (Brecon Beacons), Talybont-on-Usk, Brecon, Powys, LD3 7YS. From March to June, the courses include *Easter Rambling, Spring Snap (photography), Up and Down Weekend (hill walking and caving), Birds of the Beacons and Beyond, Fleece and Yarn (wool from sheep to skein) and Ambling in the Beacons for the Over Fifties.*

CONFERENCES

CONFERENCES AT LOSEHILL HALL

1) 14-16 Apr, *Environmental Education and Countryside Organisations.* A weekend conference to examine increasing involvement of countryside organisations in environmental education and interpretive programmes.

2) 28-30 Apr, *Landscape Photography.* Slide and tape presentations are increasingly popular. The aim is to help participants to improve their skills and techniques.

3) 27-28 May, *Open Days.* Losehill Hall and its parkland will be open to the general public who will be able to view exhibitions and displays illustrating the work of the study centre. In addition there will be demonstrations of local crafts and customs.

Details from Peter Townsend, Principal, Peak National Park Study Centre, Losehill Hall, Castleton, Derbyshire S30 2WB.